



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CYNGOR BWRDEIS TREF SIROL RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

Bydd cyfarfod rhithwir o'r **Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol** yn cael ei gynnal ar

Dydd Iau, 24 Tachwedd 2022 am 10.00 am

Swyddog cyswllt: Hannah Williams - Uned Busnes y Cyngor - Gwasanaethau
Llywodraethol (07385401954)

MATERION I'W TRAFOD

1. DATGAN BUDDIANT

Derbyn datganiadau o fuddiannau personol gan Aelodau, yn unol â'r Cod Ymddygiad.

Nodwch:

1. Mae gofyn i Aelodau ddatgan rhif a phwnc yr eitem y mae eu buddiant yn ymwneud ag ef a mynegi natur y buddiant personol hwnnw; a
2. Lle bo Aelodau'n ymneilltuo o'r cyfarfod o ganlyniad i ddatgelu buddiant sy'n rhagfarnu, rhaid iddyn nhw roi gwybod i'r Cadeirydd pan fyddan nhw'n gadael.

2. COFNODION

Cadarnhau cofnodion o gyfarfod y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol ('Y Bwrdd') ar 18 Hydref 2022 yn rhai cywir.

(Tudalennau 5 - 10)

3. TROS GYNNAL PLANT (TGP) CYMRU

Derbyn adroddiad cynnydd chwarterol Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru.

(Tudalennau 11 - 22)

**4. CYNNIG LLETY'R AWDURDOD LLEOL A GWASANAETHAU
CYMORTH TAI SY'N CAEL EU CYNNIG I BOBL IFAINC SYDD Â
PHROFIAD O FOD MEWN GOFAL**

Derbyn diweddariad mewn perthynas â'r cymorth ar faterion tai sydd wedi cael ei gynnig i bobl ifainc sy'n gadael gofal yn ystod y cyfnod rhwng 1 Ebrill 2022 a 31 Hydref 2022.

(Tudalennau 23 - 30)

5. ADRODDIAD BLYNYDDOL MEISGYN AC ADRODDIAD BLYNYDDOL CARFAN TEULUOEDD THERAPIWTIG 2021 I 2022

Derbyn adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Cymuned a Gwasanaethau i Blant sy'n rhoi gwybodaeth ddiweddaraf i'r Bwrdd am waith Carfan Meisgyn a'r Garfan Teuluoedd Therapiwtig, a nodwyd yn adroddiadau blynyddol y gwasanaethau ar gyfer 2021 i 2022.

(Tudalennau 31 - 48)

6. ADRODDIAD BLYNYDDOL 2021 I 2022 GWASANAETH MABWYSIADU CYDWEITHREDOL Y FRO, Y CYMOEDD, A CHAERDYDD (VCC)

Derbyn adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Cymuned a Gwasanaethau i Blant, sy'n cyflwyno adroddiad blynyddol 2021 i 2022 Gwasanaeth Mabwysiadu Cydweithredol y Fro, y Cymoedd, a Chaerdydd i'r Bwrdd.

(Tudalennau 49 - 108)

7. TRAFOD CADARNHAU'R PENDERFYNIAD ISOD:

“Bod y cyfarfod hwn yn cadw aelodau o'r wasg ac aelodau o'r cyhoedd allan o ystafell y cyfarfod, dan Adran 100A(4) o Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol 1972 (fel y'i diwygiwyd), yn ystod trafod yr eitem nesaf, ar y sail y byddai'n debygol o olygu datgelu gwybodaeth eithriedig yn ôl diffiniad paragraff 14 a 13 o Ran 4 o Atodlen 12A i'r Ddeddf.”

8. MAETHU CYMRU – SIARTER/CYFLOGWR SY'N YSTYRIOL O FAETHU

Derbyn adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Cymuned a Gwasanaethau i Blant, sy'n rhoi gwybodaeth i'r Bwrdd am Siarter/Cyflogwr sy'n Ystyriol o Faethu Maethu Cymru

(Tudalennau 109 - 120)

9. GWASANAETHAU CYMDEITHASOL – CWYNION A CHANMOLIAETHAU CHWARTEROL

Derbyn adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Cymuned a Gwasanaethau i Blant sy'n rhoi crynodeb i'r Bwrdd o'r trefnau gweithredu ac effeithiolrwydd gweithdrefn cwynion y Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol statudol.

(Tudalennau 121 - 140)

10. ADRODDIADAU RHEOLIAD 73

Derbyn adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Cymuned a Gwasanaethau i Blant, sy'n rhoi'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf i'r Bwrdd am ymweliadau Rheoliad 73 a'r sefyllfa bresennol yng Nghartrefi Preswyl i Blant a'r Gwasanaeth Gofal Seibiant yn RhCT.

(Tudalennau 141 - 272)

Cylchrediad:

Y Cynghorwyr Bwrdeistref Sirol:

Y Cynghorydd G Caple (Cadeirydd)

Y Cynghorydd R Lewis (Is-gadeirydd)

Y Cynghorydd C Leyshon

Y Cynghorydd J Bonetto

Y Cynghorydd S Rees

Y Cynghorydd S Trask

Y Cynghorydd S.Evans

Y Cynghorydd P Evans

tudalen wag

CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL RHONDDA CYNON TAF

BWRDD RHIANTA CORFFORAETHOL

Cofnodion o gyfarfod y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol a gynhaliwyd Dydd Mawrth, 18 Hydref 2022 am 2.30 pm ym Rhithwir.

Y Cynghorwyr Bwrdeistref Sirol - Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol Aelodau oedd yn bresennol:-:

Y Cyngorydd G Caple (Cadeirydd)

Y Cyngorydd R Lewis Y Cyngorydd C Leyshon
Y Cyngorydd S Rees

Swyddogion oedd yn bresennol

Mr P Mee, Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Cymuned a Gwasanaethau i Blant
Ms A Lloyd, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau i Blant
Ms C Miles, Cyfreithiwr Gofal Plant
Ms J Thomas, Rheolwr Gwella'r Gwasanaeth, Ymgysylltu a Chwynion
Ms H Bevan, Cydlynnydd Addysg ar gyfer Plant sy'n Derbyn Gofal
Ms M Meredith, Rheolwraig y Gwasanaethau Preswyl
Ms M Davies - TGP

1 **Croeso ac Ymddiheuriadau**

Croesawodd y Cadeirydd yr Aelodau a'r Swyddogion i gyfarfod y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol a manteisiodd ar y cyfle i dalu teyrnged i'r diweddar Gyngorydd Burnell.

Daeth ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb oddi wrth Gynghorwyr y Fwrdeistref Sirol J. Bonetto, S. Evans a S. Trask.

2 **Datgan Buddiant**

Yn unol â Chod Ymddygiad y Cyngor, ni wnaethpwyd unrhyw ddatganiadau mewn perthynas â'r Agenda.

3 **Cofnodion**

Cadarnhau cofnodion o gyfarfod y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol a gafodd ei gynnal ar 14 Mawrth 2022 yn rhai cywir.

4 **Y diweddaraf o ran cyfranogiad plant a phobl ifainc â phrofiad o fod mewn gofal a'r diweddaraf gan Voices from Care Cymru**

Rhoddodd y Swyddog Graddedig ar faterion Cyfranogiad ddiweddariad i'r Bwrdd

Rhianta Corfforaethol mewn perthynas â gwaith ymgysylltu sy'n cael ei gynnal gan y Gwasanaethau i Blant yn RhCT.

Roedd yr adroddiad yn cynnwys gwybodaeth mewn perthynas ag: -

- achlysur cyfranogiad a gynhaliwyd yn Amgueddfa Pontypridd ar 1 Medi 2022 gyda phlant sy'n derbyn gofal;
- arolwg y Gwasanaethau i Blant mewn perthynas â phlant a phobl ifainc sydd wedi derbyn gofal sy'n cael ei gynnal hyd at ganol mis Hydref 2022; ac
- uwchgynhadledd i bobl sydd wedi derbyn gofal sy'n cael ei chynnal ar ddydd Sadwrn 10 Medi gyda Gweinidogion Cymru. Bwriad yr uwchgynhadledd yw gweithio gyda phlant a phobl ifainc ledled awdurdodau lleol yng Nghymru i ddatblygu diwygiadau mawr ar gyfer plant sy'n derbyn gofal.

Yn ogystal â'r diweddariad, roedd swyddog a pherson ifanc o Voices from Care Cymru yn bresennol a rhannodd yr wybodaeth ddiweddaraf â'r Aelodau am y gwaith sy'n cael ei wneud i gefnogi pobl ifainc sydd â phrofiad o fod mewn gofal yn Rhondda Cynon Taf. Rhoddodd y person ifanc fanylion i'r Bwrdd am brosiectau diweddar a gynhaliwyd gyda VFCC, a oedd yn cynnwys menter iechyd meddwl a lles, diwrnod chwaraeon a chyfarfod ymgynghori mewn perthynas â'r uchelgeisiau ar gyfer pobl sy'n 16 oed neu'n hŷn. Rhoddodd y Person Ifanc wybod i'r Aelodau am uwchgynhadledd Cymru Gyfan sydd ar y gweill, byddai'r achlysur yma'n caniatáu i bobl ifanc â phrofiad o fod mewn gofal gael sgysiau â Gweinidogion am welliannau i wasanaethau.

Siaradodd un Aelod yn gadarnhaol am yr achlysur Ymgysylltu a dywedodd fod y sleidiau a ddefnyddiwyd yn lliwgar ac yn ddeniadol i'r bobl ifanc. Dymunodd yr Aelod ddiolch i'r person ifanc am rannu ei phrofiadau a phwysleisiodd bwysigrwydd ceisio barn pobl ifainc wrth lywio penderfyniadau sy'n dylanwadu arnyn nhw.

Ategodd Aelod arall y sylwadau blaenorol a manteisiodd ar y cyfle i ddiolch i'r person ifanc am fynychu'r cyfarfod ac estynnodd ei diolch i'r swyddog 16+ am gefnogi'r bobl ifainc.

Diolchodd y Cadeirydd i'r cyfranogwyr am eu cyflwyniad a chanmolodd y person ifanc am ei chyfraniad. Ychwanegodd y Cadeirydd ei bod hi'n falch o nodi sut y mae modd i wasanaethau o'r fath wella hyder pobl ifanc.

PENDERFYNODD y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol:

1. Nodi'r wybodaeth oedd wedi ei chynnwys yn yr adroddiad; a
2. Dylai Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf lofnodi'r Siarter ar gyfer Rhieni sy'n Derbyn Gofal ac sy'n Gadael Gofal.

5 Rhaglen Waith y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol

Cyflwynodd yr Uwch Swyddog Busnes Rheoleiddiol a Gweithredol adroddiad i'r Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol sy'n amlinellu'r rhaglen waith (ddrafft) ar gyfer blwyddyn y Cyngor 2022-2023. Ochr yn ochr â'r diweddariadau blynyddol rheolaidd, roedd llawer o'r pynciau i'w trafod yn y Rhaglen wedi cael eu nodi gan Aelodau yn ystod cyfarfodydd blaenorol.

Eglurodd y swyddog fod y Rhaglen Waith yn ddogfen newidiol y mae modd ei diwygio i adlewyrchu unrhyw newidiadau i anghenion busnes trwy gydol y flwyddyn.

PENDERFYNODD y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol:

1. Cynnig sylwadau mewn perthynas â'r Rhaglen Waith ddrafft ble'n addas;
2. Cymeradwyo'r rhaglen waith ddrafft, a bydd modd ei diwygio i adlewyrchu unrhyw flaenoriaethau sy'n newid yn ystod y flwyddyn.

6 Adroddiad Blynyddol y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol 2021-22

Rhoddodd yr Uwch Swyddog Busnes Rheoleiddiol a Gweithredol Adroddiad Blynyddol y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol i'r Aelodau ar gyfer blwyddyn y Cyngor 2021-2022. Roedd yr adroddiad yn cynnwys y gwaith sydd yn cael ei drafod gan y Bwrdd yn ystod y flwyddyn; ac yn cynnig eitemau sydd wedi'u nodi fel eitemau i'w trafod yn y dyfodol.

Roedd y swyddog wedi atgoffa'r Aelodau y byddai'r adroddiad yn cael ei gyflwyno i'r Cabinet pe bai'n cael ei gymeradwyo.

Diolchodd y Cadeirydd i'r swyddog am yr adroddiad manwl a **PENDERFYNODD** y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol:

1. Cynnig sylwadau mewn perthynas â'r Adroddiad Blynyddol drafft cyn ei gyflwyno i'r Cabinet, ble'n addas.

7 Strategaeth Plant sy'n Derbyn Gofal

Darparodd Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau i Blant wybodaeth i'r Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol mewn perthynas â'r cynnydd y mae'r Gwasanaethau i Blant wedi'i wneud o ran y Strategaeth Atal ar gyfer Plant sy'n Derbyn Gofal; adroddiad a gafodd ei drafod gan y Pwyllgor Craffu a'i gymeradwyo gan y Cabinet ym mis Ionawr 2022.

Darparodd y Cyfarwyddwr wybodaeth am y pedwar maes gwella sylweddol a nodwyd yn yr adroddiad a phwysleisiodd bod swyddogion eisoes yn gweithio tuag at weithredu'r meysydd yma. Soniodd y Cyfarwyddwr am yr uchelgais i gynyddu'r cymorth sy'n seiliedig ar dystiolaeth sydd ar gael i deuluoedd ac i weithio tuag at gadw teuluoedd yn ddiogel gyda'i gilydd, ble'n addas.

PENDERFYNODD y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol:

1. Nodi'r wybodaeth oedd wedi ei chynnwys yn yr adroddiad.

8 Siarter ar gyfer Rhieni sy'n Derbyn Gofal ac yn Gadael Gofal

Derbyn adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau i Blant, sy'n rhoi gwybodaeth i Aelodau'r Bwrdd am y Siarter ar gyfer Rhieni sy'n Derbyn Gofal ac yn Gadael Gofal.

Siaradodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth am y sail resymegol dros y Siarter a'r grŵp ffocws, a gynhaliwyd gyda gweithwyr proffesiynol a phobl ifanc â phrofiad o fod mewn gofal ym mis Gorffennaf 2022. Manteisiodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth ar y cyfle i ddiolch i Gynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol S. Rees am ei chyfraniad hi.

Darparodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth wybodaeth am bedwar maes y Siarter ac mae'r camau nesaf er mwyn sicrhau cydymffurfiaeth yn mynd y tu hwnt i gofrestru ac yn cael effaith ystyrlon ar bobl ifainc sy'n agored i niwed.

Roedd un Aelod yn falch o nodi bod y Siarter yn rhagweithiol o ran targedu pobl ifanc sy'n ddarpar-rieni, yn ogystal ag ymgysylltu â phobl ifainc sy'n rhieni.

Siaradodd Aelod arall yn gadarnhaol am y grŵp ffocws a gynhaliwyd ym mis Mehefin a holodd sut mae swyddogion yn bwriadu mesur effeithiolrwydd y Siarter wrth symud ymlaen. Dywedodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth fod data eisoes yn dangos gwelliannau bach ac o ganlyniad i hynny, bu gwelliant yng nghyfradd y plant dan tair oed neu un oed sy'n derbyn gofal. Soniodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth hefyd am y cynnydd cadarnhaol y mae'r Garfan Magu wedi'i wneud, dyma wasanaeth sy'n ceisio cefnogi'r rhieni mwyaf agored i niwed a'r rhieni hynny sydd fwyaf mewn perygl o'u plant yn dod o dan adain gofal y Cyngor. Dywedodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth, yn amodol ar farn y Cadeirydd, y byddai adroddiadau mewn perthynas â data cyflawniad a chynnydd y Gwasanaeth Magu yn cael eu cyflwyno i'r Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol yn y dyfodol.

PENDERFYNODD y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol:

1. Nodi'r wybodaeth oedd wedi ei chynnwys yn yr adroddiad;
2. Y dylai Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf lofnodi'r Siarter ar gyfer Rhieni sy'n Derbyn Gofal ac sy'n Gadael Gofal; a
3. Bydd adroddiadau mewn perthynas â data cyflawniad a chynnydd y Gwasanaeth Magu yn cael eu cyflwyno i'r Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol yn y dyfodol.

9 Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru

Rhannodd Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru fanylion am y cynnydd y mae'r gwasanaeth wedi'i wneud rhwng Ionawr a Mehefin 2022 â'r Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol.

Clywodd yr Aelodau fod 48 o bobl ifainc wedi manteisio ar y Gwasanaeth yn Seiliedig ar Faterion yn ystod y chwarter (Ebrill-Mehefin 2022), gan gyflwyno 61 o faterion; a chafodd 19 o bobl ifainc eraill eu hatgyfeirio ar gyfer y Cynnig Gweithredol. O ran Plant sy'n Derbyn Gofal, roedd 13 o bobl ifainc yn gymwys a 4 wedi'u hatgyfeirio, gyda phob un ohonynt yn derbyn y cynnig. Dywedodd y swyddog fod 75% wedi cael eu cyflawni cyn pen 5 diwrnod gwaith ar ôl derbyn yr atgyfeiriad, gan esbonio bod oedi gydag un achos oherwydd bod angen trefnu cyfieithydd.

Aeth y swyddog ymlaen i siarad am y systemau sydd ar waith i fonitro sut mae'r bobl ifainc yn derbyn y cynnig rhagweithiol. Eglurwyd bod data ar gael i fonitro'r bobl ifainc sy'n derbyn y cynnig gan nodi rhesymau ynghylch pam bod rhai yn dewis gwrthod y cynnig.

O ran atgyfeiriadau ar sail materion, roedd 22 o bobl ifainc wedi'u hatgyfeirio gyda 26 o faterion penodol, ynghyd â dau berson ifanc sy'n gadael gofal gyda 3 mater penodol. Cafodd yr Aelodau wybod bod llawer o waith wedi cael ei wneud i wella'r systemau cofnodi er mwyn dysgu rhagor am yr hyn sy'n cael ei ddweud yn y cyfarfodydd.

Nododd y swyddog fod yr adroddiad yn cynnwys llawer o wybodaeth am ddata amddiffyn plant ac awgrymodd y byddai adroddiadau llai sy'n mynd i'r afael â Phlant sy'n Derbyn Gofal yn cael eu llunio yn y dyfodol, ac roedd yr Aelodau wedi cytuno â hyn.

Diolchodd y Cadeirydd i swyddogion Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru am yr adroddiad llawn gwybodaeth a phwysleisiodd pa mor bwysig yw'r gwasanaeth eiriolaeth i bobl ifanc.

PENDERFYNODD y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol:

1. Nodi cynnwys yr adroddiad.

10 **Grant Amddifadedd Disgyblion**

Rhannodd y Cydlynnydd Addysg ar gyfer Plant sy'n Derbyn Gofal a'r Arweinydd Rhanbarthol ar gyfer y Grant Amddifadedd Disgyblion i Blant sy'n Derbyn Gofal ddiweddiariad mewn perthynas â phroses werthuso'r model clwstwr ysgolion ar gyfer cyllido'r Grant Amddifadedd Disgyblion (PDG) yn ystod blwyddyn ariannol 2020/21 a 2021/22 yn Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Dymunodd y Cadeirydd ddiolch i'r swyddogion am yr adroddiad cynhwysfawr a dywedodd ei fod yn dyst i'r gwaith sydd wedi cael ei wneud ers cyfnod covid er mwyn helpu pobl ifainc i ffynnu.

O ran y Model Ysgol Rithwir, nododd un Aelod y cynnydd cadarnhaol sydd yn cael ei wneud a gofynnodd cwestiwn ynghylch sut y rhennir arfer da ymhlith ysgolion, yn enwedig mewn ysgolion cynradd. Dywedodd yr Arweinydd Rhanbarthol, er mai cynllun peilot oedd hwn, bod swyddogion yn gweithio'n agos gyda'i gilydd ac yn frwdfrydig i fonitro ei gynnydd ond dywedodd fod y swyddog oedd yn gweithio ar ran Llywodraeth Cymru, a gyflwynodd y model, wedi gadael ei swydd yn ddiweddar a bod hynny wedi achosi peth oedi. Soniodd yr Arweinydd Rhanbarthol am gynlluniau i weithio mewn dwy ysgol yn y Fwrdeistref Sirol, lle cafodd Covid effaith niweidiol ar waharddiadau. Cafodd yr Aelodau wybod am y bwriad i gynnal y prosiect a gwerthuso'i lwyddiant. Yn ogystal â hyn, soniodd yr Arweinydd Rhanbarthol am weithredu mentrau wedi'u harwain gan gyfoedion a fyddai'n gweld y plant hŷn yn gweithio gyda phlant iau trwy'r ddarpariaeth ABCh neu'r cwricwlwm iechyd a lles.

Diolchodd y Cadeirydd i'r swyddogion am y diweddiariad a gofynnodd i'r swyddogion gyflwyno adroddiad pellach yn ystod cyfarfod yn y dyfodol.

PENDERFYNODD y Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol:

1. Trafod yr wybodaeth oedd wedi ei chynnwys yn yr adroddiad;
2. Pwyso a mesur yr wybodaeth a chynnig sylwadau
3. Derbyn adroddiad pellach i werthuso model clwstwr Grant Amddifadedd Disgyblion i Blant sy'n Derbyn Gofal ar gyfer 2022/23.

11 **Trafod cadarnhau'r Penderfyniad isod:-**

PENDERFYNWYD bod y cyfarfod hwn yn cadw aelodau o'r wasg ac aelodau o'r cyhoedd allan o ystafell y cyfarfod, dan Adran 100A(4) o'r Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol (fel y'i diwygiwyd), yn ystod trafod yr agendwm nesaf, ar y sail y byddai'n debygol o olygu datgelu gwybodaeth eithriedig yn ôl diffiniad paragraff 13 o Ran 4 o Atodlen 12A o'r Ddeddf.

12 **Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol – Cwynion a Chanmoliaethau Chwarterol**

Rhoddodd y Rheolwr Cwynion, Ymgysylltu a Gwella Gwasanaethau grynodedb i'r Bwrdd Rhianta Corfforaethol o'r trefnau gweithredu ac o effeithiolrwydd gweithdrefn cwynion y Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol statudol rhwng 1 Ionawr 2022 a 30 Mehefin 2022.

Roedd yr adroddiad yn cynnwys gwybodaeth am nifer y cwynion a ddaeth i law, natur y cwynion, ac unrhyw wersi a ddysgwyd, yn ogystal â manylu ar ymholiadau gan Gynghorwyr, Aelodau Cynulliad ac Aelodau Seneddol a nifer y cwynion a ddaeth i law.

Yn dilyn trafodaeth, **PENDERFYNWYD:**

1. Nodi cynnwys yr adroddiad.

13 **Adroddiad Adolygiad Ansawdd Gofal (Rheoliad 80)**

Rhoddodd Rheolwr y Gwasanaethau Preswyl ddiwedddariad i'r Bwrdd am y gwaith monitro sydd wedi'i wneud yn unol â Deddf Rheoleiddio ac Arolygu Gofal Cymdeithasol (Cymru) 2016 a'r sefyllfa bresennol mewn pedwar cartref preswyl i blant yn RhCT.

Siaradodd un Aelod am yr adborth cadarnhaol a dderbyniwyd gan y gymuned mewn perthynas â Chartref Bryndâr a gofynnodd a fyddai modd rhannu'r adborth yma â'r cartref.

Yn dilyn trafodaeth, **PENDERFYNWYD:**

1. Nodi cynnwys yr adroddiad.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 3.30 pm

**Y Cynghorydd G Caple
Cadeirydd.**

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

24TH NOVEMBER 2022

TROS GYNNAL PLANT (TGP) CYMRU UPDATE

1. **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Board with an update of progress made by Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the work undertaken by TGP Cymru, the content of which is attached at Appendix 1.

3. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is important for Members to note the progress, themes and issues highlighted by the TGP Cymru, in order to work in partnership to ensure the best possible outcomes are reached for those in our care system.

4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 As part of the Board's Terms of reference, TGP Cymru are invited to attend meetings to enable both the TGP Cymru and Children Services to discuss issues that affect service delivery in the community on a strategic level and to work in partnership to provide improved and better outcomes.

5. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

6. **CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 There is no consultation required for this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

9.1 The work of the Corporate Parenting Board links directly to the Council's Corporate Plan priority – 'Rhondda Cynon Taf's Children will receive a great start in life...'

9.2 The work of TGP Cymru links to the Future Generations Well-Being Goal of a more equal Wales, by ensuring that children and young people are supported when decisions are being made about them. This ensures that young people have access to a range of information in order to fulfil their potential.

9.3 In addition to the duty to listen to young people and involve them in decisions, the Part 10 Code of Practice (Advocacy) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the duties to consider the provision of independent professional advocacy in certain circumstances for:

- Children who are looked after (who should benefit from an active offer of professional independent advocacy) or have previously been looked after
- Children who are subject to an assessment of need or a care and support plan or child protection enquiries

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 TGP Cymru are invited to attend meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board, to provide a broader understanding and contribution into the services available to young people and vulnerable adults.

**Cwm Taf Morgannwg Independent Advocacy Service
RCT Care Experienced Young People and Care Leavers
Report**

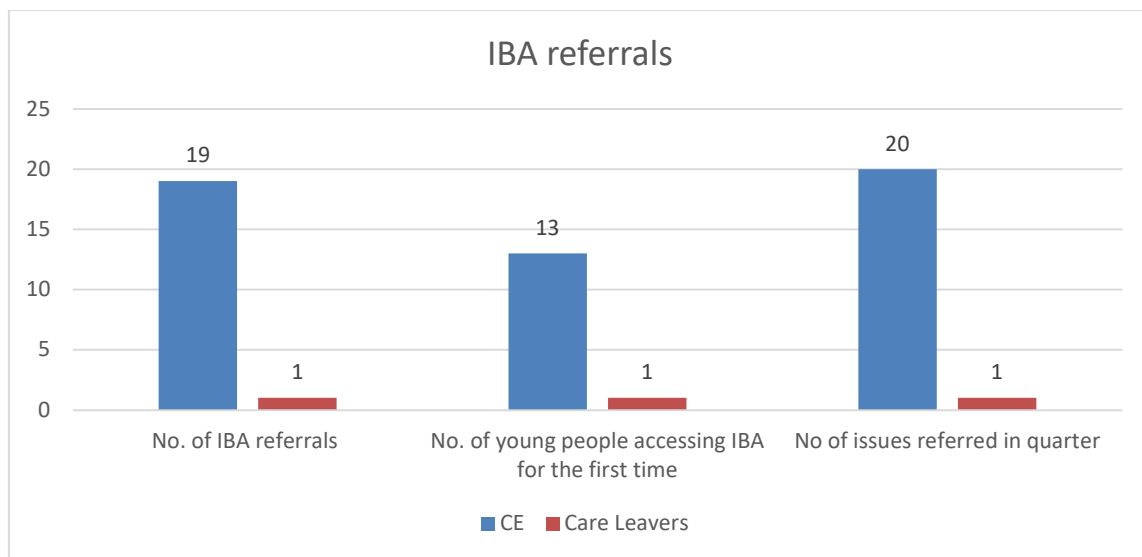
Quarter Two July 2022 – September 2022



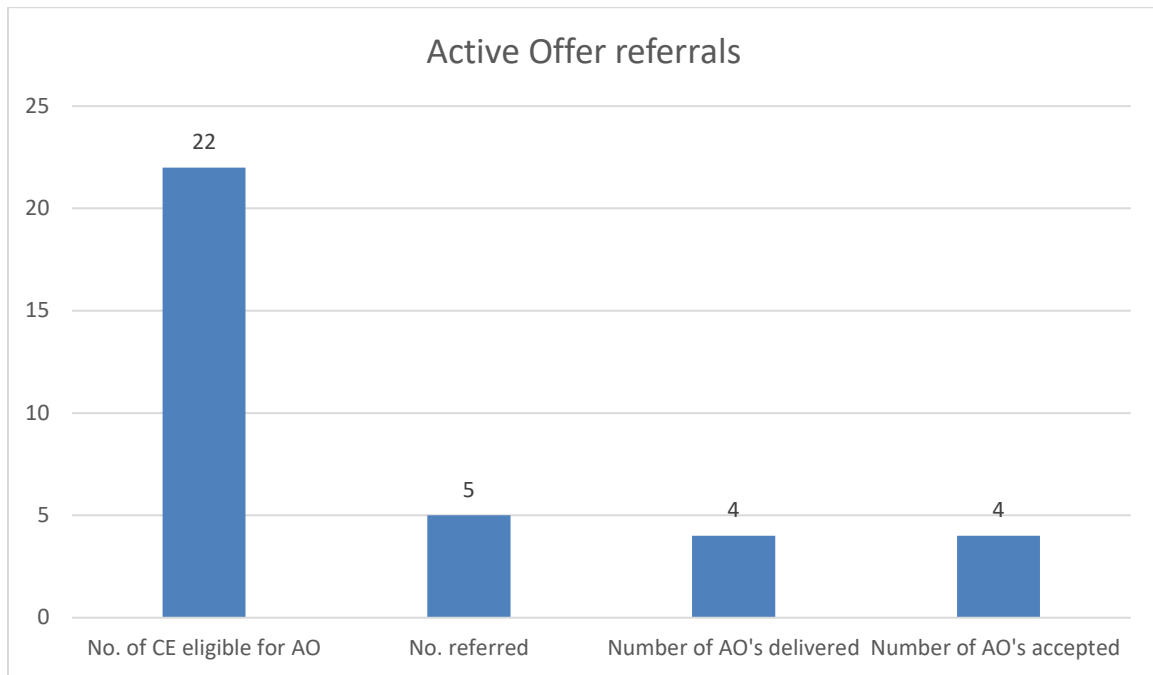
In quarter two, 46 young people accessed Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) and 21 young people were referred for the Active Offer (AO) across RCT.

This report has been prepared for RCT Corporate Parenting Board and provides information on the service delivered to care experienced (CE) young people and care leavers only.

In quarter two, 19 CE young people and one care leaver accessed IBA, presenting with 21 issues. Five care experienced young people were referred for the AO.



Some 13 of the 19 CE young people accessing IBA were doing so for the first time.



According to information provided by RCT, 22 CE young people became eligible for the AO in quarter two. Four AOs were delivered by advocates and four young people accepted the AO and went on to receive IBA. This means 23% of eligible young people were referred for AO.

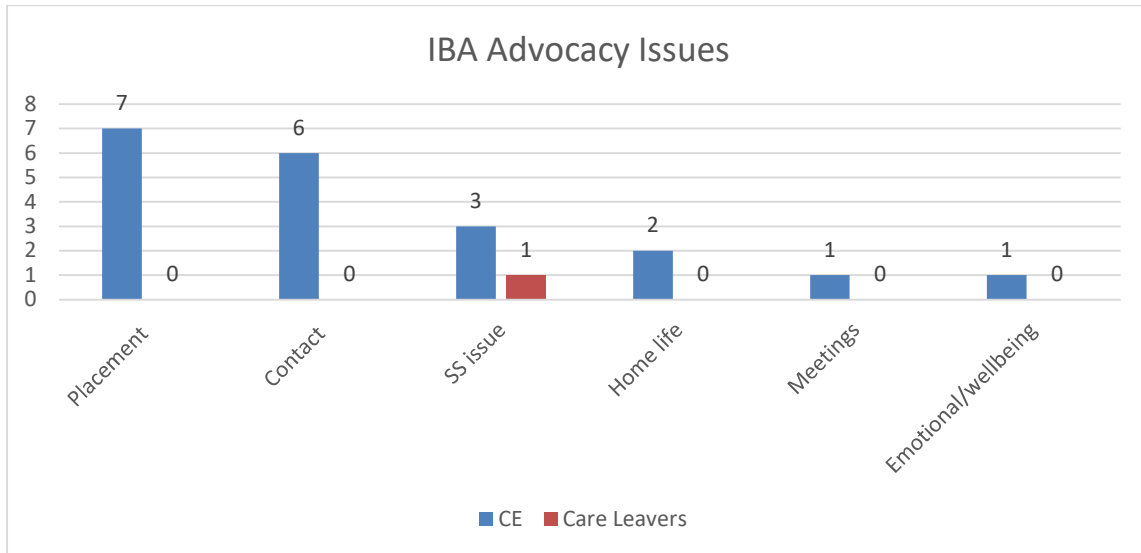
Of the 22 CE young people who became eligible in quarter two, eight young people were recorded as accepting the opportunity to receive the AO. Of the eight who accepted, five young people were referred for AO. One young person was recorded as rejecting the AO visit when offered by their social worker, but was referred for AO, and accepted in quarter two. One young person was referred for AO via the CP pathway as she was both looked after and on the CP Register at the time of referral.

We have not received referrals for two young people recorded as accepting the AO visit when it was offered by their social worker.

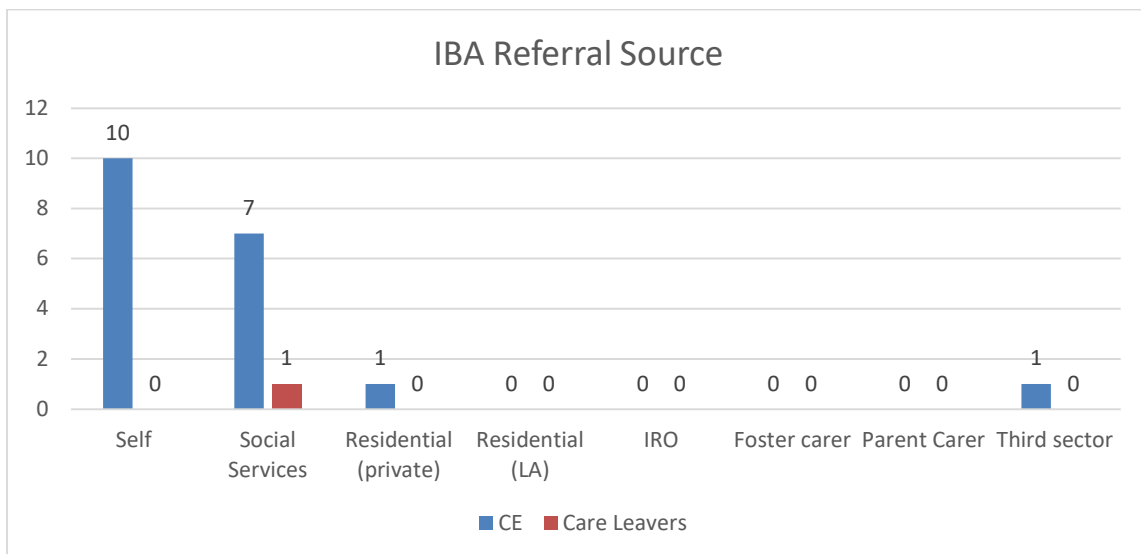
Six CE young people were recorded as rejecting the offer of an AO meeting. The main reason for rejecting the AO was that the young person felt they didn't need the service because they could talk to their social worker or another professional. One young person rejected the AO meeting without a reason but was later referred to the advocacy service.

Six eligible young people did not have the conversation with their social worker for the following reasons: three siblings were only looked after for a short period when their ICO was revoked. Two had received AOs via the CP route last year and the youngest was referred for IBA as he was too young for AO at the time. One social worker decided not to have the conversation with the young person because they were only looked after for one weekend. Another decided against the conversation with two siblings because their parents did not want them to know children's services were involved.

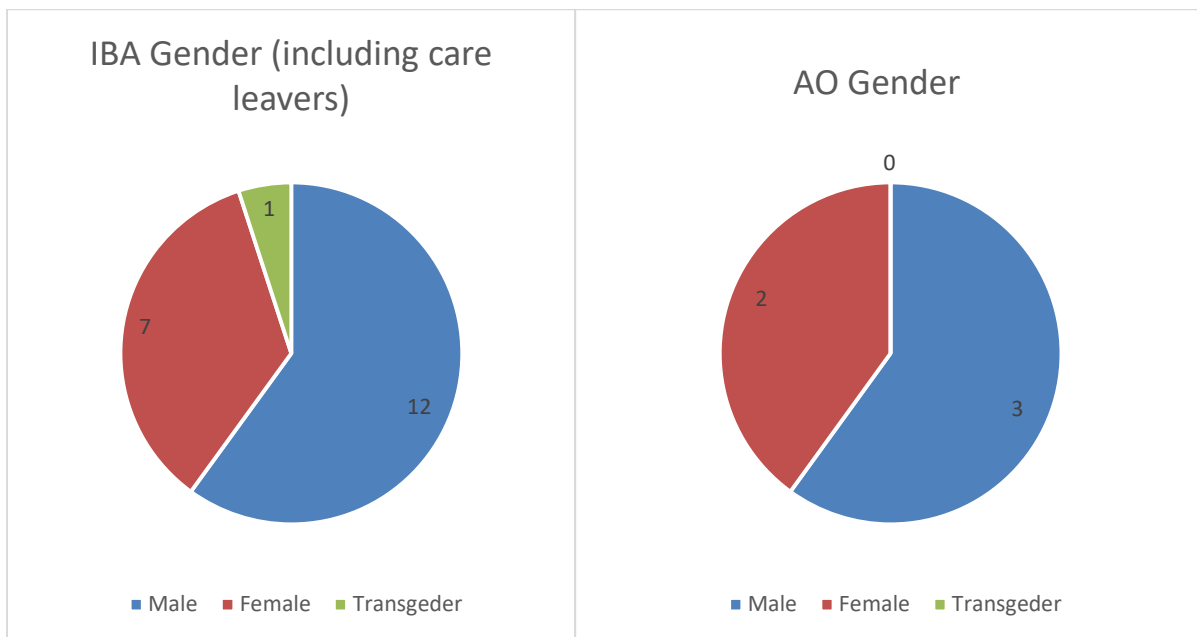
We do not know if two young people had the conversation with their social worker as they are neither recorded as accepting or rejecting the AO on the spreadsheet provided.



The most popular issues in need of advocacy support in quarter two, were placement followed by contact.

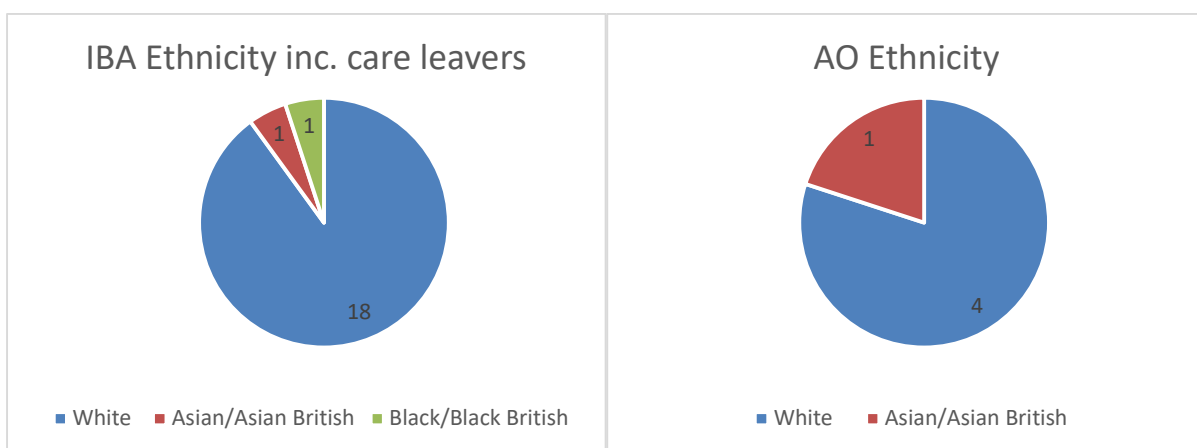


Social services referral and 'self-referral' is the most popular route into the IBA service for care experienced young people and care leavers. This is usually either the result of the young person accepting the AO and going on to received IBA, or the young person contacting their advocate directly with a new issue.



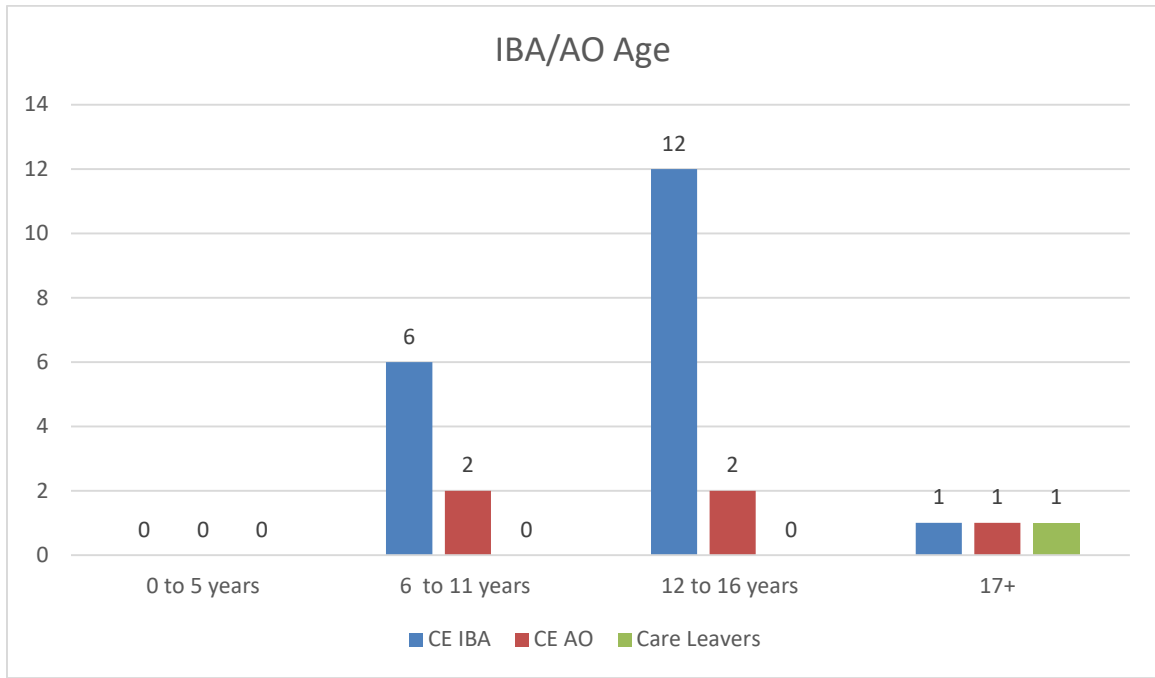
Of those care experienced young people accessing IBA in quarter two, 12 were males, compared to seven females and one transgender young person.

Care experienced young people referred for AO were split fairly evenly with three males and two females referred.



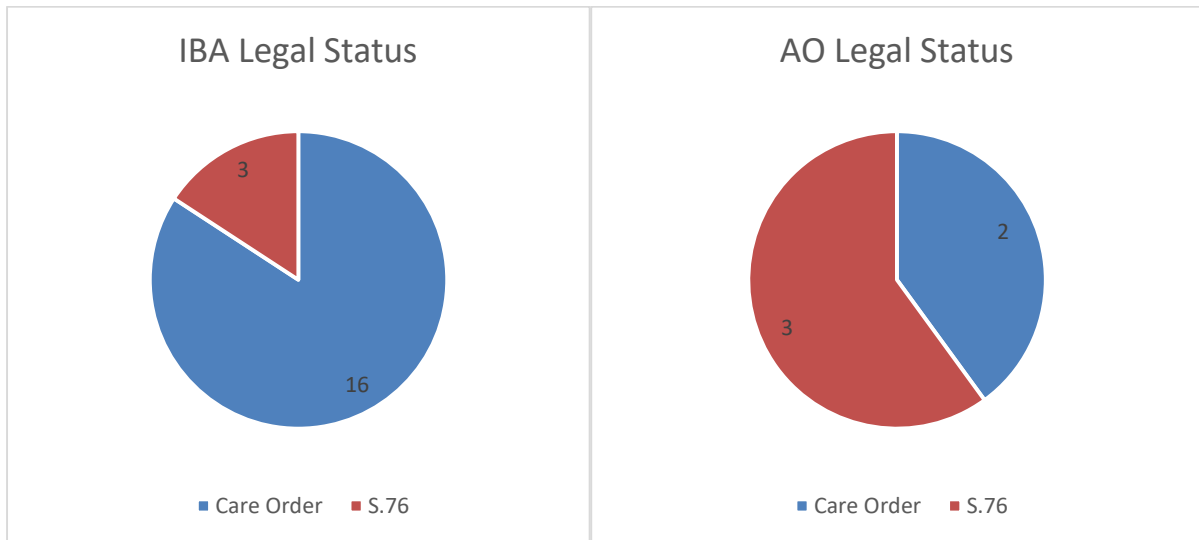
All but two of the CE young people and care leavers accessing IBA in quarter two were white.

All but one young people referred for AO described themselves as white.

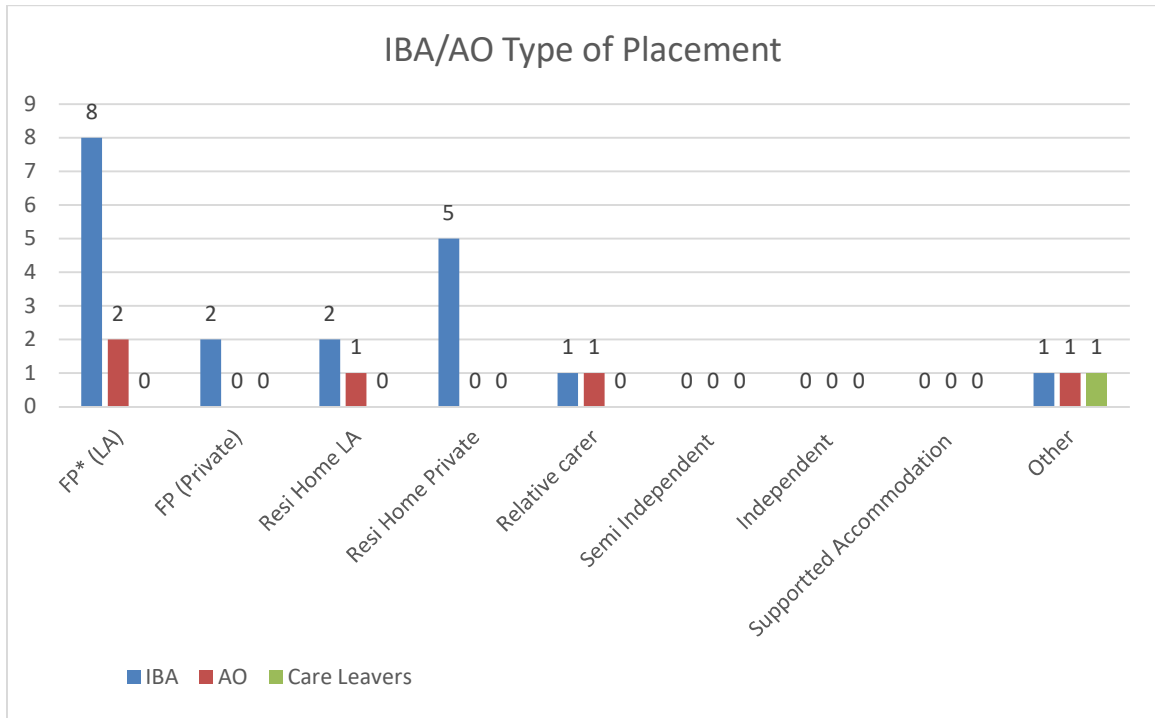


Most CE young people accessing the IBA service in quarter two were aged between 12 and 16 years.

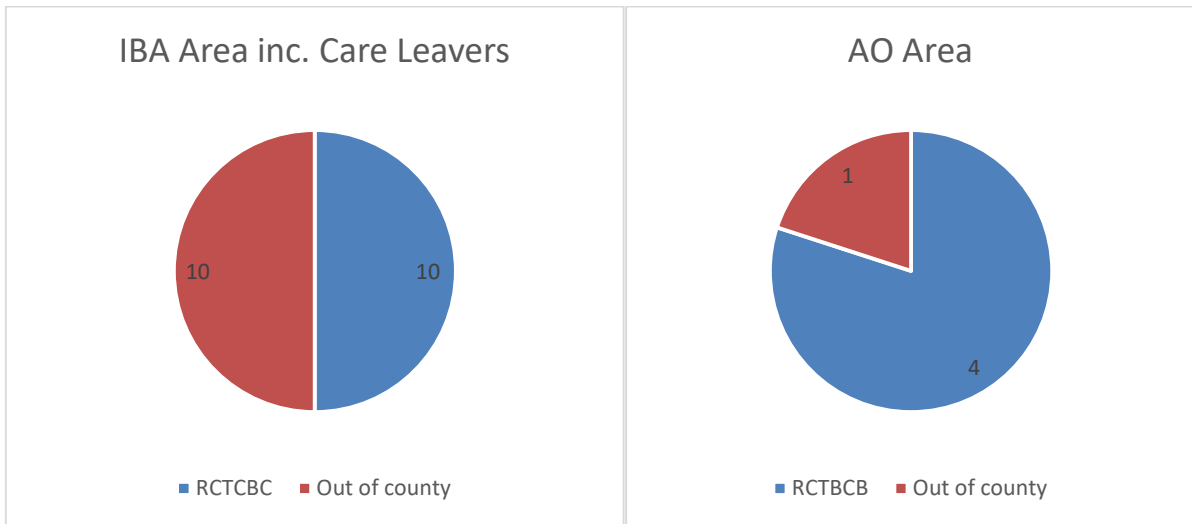
The five CE young people referred for AO were split evenly between the 6-11 and 12-16 age categories with the addition of one young person aged over 16 years.



Most CE young people accessing IBA in quarter two were subject to a full care order while the majority of those referred for AO were accommodated voluntarily.



Most CE young people accessing advocacy services in quarter two were living in a local authority foster placement at the time of referral.



Advocates supported 10 CE young people living outside of RCT in quarter two, in areas including Merthyr, Swansea, Newport, Carmarthenshire and London.

One young person referred for AO lived in Bridgend.

Other information

We have received one referral for an unaccompanied asylum-seeking young person who will be supported to access an Arabic interpreter to communicate with his advocate.

Two disabled CE young people accessed IBA in quarter two (ASD and Cerebral Palsy) and one young person with additional learning needs was also referred.

Visiting Advocacy

Visiting Advocacy continues in five Local Authority community homes across RCT. Face-to-face visits have continued monthly in Bryndar and Beddau. The remaining three homes, Carn Ingli, Nantygwyn and Ty Brynna have advised monthly visits are not appropriate and have requested the advocate visits every two months and stays connected via telephone contact instead. Visiting advocacy has resulted in two IBA referrals for young people living in community homes in quarter two.

Service Information

Following the recent change to the way we record how children and young people are supported at meetings we have continued to observe increases in other issues such as contact and placement and a reduction in 'support at meetings' issues. We will continue to record advocacy attendance at meetings but will do this separately and the recording of issues rather than meetings will continue to tell us more about what young people want to discuss both in and out of meetings.

During quarter two, 'support at meetings' was the main issue only once for CE young people, however, advocates supported children and young people to share wishes and feelings at CLA reviews eight times during quarter two.

We anticipate that who young people spend time with, and how they feel at home will continue to be two of the most prominent issues young people will want to discuss with their advocates. We have planned to make amendments to the way we record contact issues in the future, which will allow us to access data more easily about who young people want to spend their time with.

The CTM advocacy team manager and administrator met with new members of the RCT social care management information team in September. This was a good opportunity to review the process by which RCT share information on young people eligible for the Active Offer service with us. The communication from the team has always been helpful and efficient and we are confident this will continue.

Case Example

Please find below an example of advocacy work undertaken during the quarter from within RCT. The name has been changed to protect the young person's identity.

Situation: Sam is nine years old and was referred to the advocacy service following a breakdown in the relationship between Sam's aunt and uncle whom he had been living with. Sam's aunt and uncle were also his registered foster carers, and Sam had chosen to live with his uncle and his new partner following their split. Sam had been having regular contact with his aunt, but after the contact was put on hold due to his aunt having an operation, Sam said he did not want the contact to resume. Sam's aunt was concerned he was being unfairly influenced by his uncle and his new partner.

Action: The advocate planned to meet with Sam at his home, which was out of county, during the summer holidays after asking where Sam would like to meet. Sam and the advocate were able to talk privately at home, and the advocate was able to ask Sam if he would like any help to share his feelings or challenge any decisions around the current arrangements for him to spend time with his aunt. Sam explained he had decided not to see his aunt at all, mainly because when he had been spending time with her, she had asked lots of questions about his uncle's partner which he didn't like at all. Sam said his uncle was fine with him seeing his aunt, but he wanted to have a break for at least a few months while he settled into his new home. Sam was very clear that he wouldn't change his mind, even if his aunt promised not to ask him any more questions, but he would think about contact again leading up to his next CLA Review.

Outcome: As a result of Sam independently sharing his wishes via his advocate, his social worker agreed that contact with Sam's aunt would be suspended until his next CLA Review. Sam was happy with the advocate's suggestion that they visit him again before the review, to help him share any further wishes and feelings he may have. Sam felt he may be ready to see his aunt then and was really happy that it wasn't something he had to worry about or be asked about again over the next few months.

Conclusion and looking forward

Referrals for CE young people and care leavers have remained consistent when compared to the previous quarter, with an increase of one CE young person being referred for AO, and three less CE young people accessing IBA. One less care leaver accessed IBA in quarter one. This means only three care leavers have accessed the IBA service in the last six months. The Advocacy team manager will contact the 16+ team manager in the next quarter to address the lack of IBA referrals for care leavers.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

24TH NOVEMBER 2022

LOCAL AUTHORITY'S OFFER OF ACCOMMODATION AND HOUSING SUPPORT RELATED SERVICES TO CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE

Author: **Cheryl Emery – Head of Community Safety and Community
Housing**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with an update in respect of the housing and support assistance to young people leaving care for the period 1st April 2022 to the 31st of October 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board acknowledge the information contained within the report.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This is an information report.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Legislative change in Wales has led to a strengthening of duties on local authorities to prevent, and address, homelessness more effectively. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 requires local authorities to produce a joint strategy between housing and social services to address homelessness. This reinforces the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 requirement that housing and social services work together to meet the needs of young people in care as they move to independent living. The statutory responsibility of social services to provide a pathway plan for all those leaving care – to facilitate their transition to independence – can now, where necessary, include a

personal housing plan which focuses specifically on their housing needs.

- 4.2 To meet the above duties and ensure effective collaboration officers from Children Services and Community Housing are working together to enhance joint working arrangements, through a care leaver pathway. The development of a care leaver pathway will offer a joined-up assessment and a single planning process.
- 4.3 This includes a dedicated Housing Solutions Officer role to provide a single point of contact and help identify all available housing options in consideration of a young person's housing and support needs. This will include supported accommodation, Housing First and general needs provision

An outline of the Housing and Support Options that are presently available to Young People Leaving

Social Housing Homefinder (Allocations)

The Community Housing Department manages the gateway to social housing in RCT in partnership with social housing landlords. Care leavers can apply directly for social housing with applications considered by the Move on Panel, who determine if the young person is ready to live independently. If approved care leavers are placed in Band A which is the highest priority band and are then able to bid for 1 bedroom accommodation in the areas of their choice. It must be noted there is limited supply and a high demand for one bedroom accommodation particularly in the south of the borough.

Between the 1st of April and 31st October 2022, 14 care leavers have applied to Homefinder and have been assessed as ready to live Independently and registered for housing and placed in Band A. 8 allocations of social housing have made to care leavers during this period with 2 young people leaving care awaiting a tenancy in a new build project in Taff's Well.

Private Rented Accommodation

The availability of single person accommodation in the private rented sector is a significant challenge in the borough. The Council has received Welsh Government funding to set up a Social Housing Letting Agency (SLA) in Rhondda Cynon Taff. This is a pilot scheme which aims to improve access and support to private landlords to offer long term affordable and good quality accommodation with support in the private rented sector. However, the challenge remains affordability and securing accommodation within Local Housing

Allowance rates which has become almost impossible for anyone in receipt of benefits or a low income.

Housing Related Support Services

Our supported and supportive accommodation services for care leavers helps them secure tenancies and address issues preventing them from living independently.

We currently commission through Housing Support Grant wide ranging provision and holistic support services to care leavers and young people aged 16 -25.

This includes as set out below 28 units of supported accommodation and 11 units of emergency accommodation for young people aged 16-25.

Supported Accommodation				
Provider	Project	Project Type	Units	Total Units
Hafan Cymru	Dispersed	Support when required (Low need)	11	28
Hafan Cymru	Boys shared	Support 24/7 (High need)	3	
Hafan Cymru	Girls shared	Support 24/7 (High need)	3	
Llamau	Dunraven Street	Support when required (Low need)	3	
Llamau	Ty Rhondda	Support 24/7 (High need)	3	
Pobl	The Old Bakery	Support 24/7 (High need)	5	
Emergency Accommodation				
Provider	Project	Project Type	Units	Total Units
Pobl	The Grange	24/7 support emergency	10	11
Llamau	Emergency Room	24/7 support emergency	1	

Between the 1st of April and 31st October 2022, 45 young people have accessed the 28 supported accommodation units. Of these 45 individuals, 9 of these were identified as care leavers.

Since April 2022 to date, we have helped 32 young people access the 11 emergency units.

Despite this assistance, demand for supported accommodation remains high with 8 young people currently on the waiting list. Work is underway to develop a purpose-built project offering 4 units of 24/7 supported accommodation for young people aged 16 -25 including care leavers and is due online in early 2023/24. Challenges remain funding to be able to commission new supported accommodation provision and suitable buildings to develop a project.

Floating Support

The RCT locality based floating support project provides person centred support to people who already have their own accommodation or who are in the process of moving into a property from a permanent full time care setting.

This service helps many individuals including young people to further develop their independent living skills and help them to sustain their tenancies. Over the first 7 months of this year 12 referrals from care leavers were received for tenancy related support and accepted on scheme.

Housing First Project

The Housing First Project in RCT is partnership between RCTCBC and Llamau and provides a person-centred approach for young people who have high support needs and who will find living in supported accommodation and general needs accommodation without support a challenge.

The project is designed to address the needs of young adults by providing them with immediate access to housing that is safe, affordable, and appropriate, and the necessary and age-appropriate support that focus on health, wellbeing, life skills, engagement in education and employment, and social inclusion. The project is currently supporting 10 young people with 4 young people (40%) maintaining their tenancies for 6 months or longer at the end of October. 5 young people are awaiting an offer of accommodation and 1 young person placed in emergency accommodation due to ending their tenancy.

Supported Lodgings

Supported Lodgings provision is currently commissioned through Housing Support Grant in partnership with Community Housing and Children's Services; to provide young people leaving care with a safe home and to offer practical advice and help to manage their lifestyle and become independent. 9 care leavers are currently placed in a supported lodgings placement in Rhondda Cynon Taff.

Get Ready and Move on Project (GRAMO)

Early intervention and prevention are viewed as a fundamental and a common theme which connects directly to the Housing Act Wales, Social Services and Wellbeing Act and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

The GRAMO project provides an early intervention pre-tenancy learning environment for all individuals to develop and evidence the skills to manage a tenancy. The learning is tailored to the client attending each session. Areas

covered in each session include money management, understanding a Tenancy Agreement, Life skills, managing a home and digital inclusion.

Sessions for care leavers are held on a 121 basis to help support their learning and understanding of living independently prior to leaving care.

During the period 1st April 2022 to the 31st of October 2022, 9 care leavers were referred to GRAMO and completed the course.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1 This is an information report

6 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This is an information report.

7 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

7.1 This is an information report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 There are no direct financial implications aligned to this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that children in care and former children in care receive appropriate support in their transition into adulthood.

9.2 Section 1.34 of the Welsh Government's Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness Guidance (March 2016) confirms Local Authorities have a range of duties to care leavers who represent a particularly vulnerable group and require Children's Services and Housing to work together to work together to meet the needs of young people in care as they move to independent living.

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

10.1 The business covered in this report contributes to the Corporate and National Priorities and Well Being and Future Generations Act following well-being goals which include:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A globally responsible Wales

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 The provision of Welsh Government funding to increase the supply of both temporary and permanent accommodation has helped. However, despite this financial assistance there is a limited availability of suitable and affordable accommodation in both the social and private rented sector. This is having a significant impact on young people being able to leave care in a planned way and to be able to live independently.

11.2 Whilst a considerable amount of work has been undertaken to address the immediate housing and support needs of young people leaving care. Further work is to explore more sustainable long- term support and accommodation options.

11.3 Working in partnership with health and our third sector partners is also vital to ensure appropriate support services are in place for young people to address complex needs such as substance misuse and mental health.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

24TH NOVEMBER 2022

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

24th NOVEMBER 2022

REPORT OF DIRECTOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR G CAPLE

MISKIN AND THE THERAPEUTIC FAMILIES TEAM ANNUAL REPORTS

Author(s): Matthew Free (Service Manager), Sarah Longhurst and Jay Goulding (Team Managers).

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Corporate Parenting Board members on the work of the Miskin Teams, Integrated Family Support Team (IFST), Therapeutic Families Team (TFT) set out in the services' annual report for 2021-2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the information contained within the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This is an information report.

4. BACKGROUND

Miskin is a set of services whose purpose are to prevent child–parent separation or placement breakdown. We do this through the deployment of evidence-based, time limited interventions which are co-produced with the family and the referring case worker. Our work can include:



- Supporting children and young people to remain living at home in their own communities with parents/family members, reducing risks to children living at home, whilst also reducing risk of child/parent separation and family breakdown.
- Supporting young people who are looked after where there is a risk of breakdown.
- Supporting reunification plans for children and young people to return home from care to live with parents/family members.
- Supporting young people to return from living in 'out of county' care placements to return home to parents/family members or to live more locally.

Headline outcomes 2021-22

- *96% of children remained at home living with either parents or extended family members at the end of the Miskin Intervention where the aim was to prevent children from coming into care.*
- *79% of children 11-17 years of age remained living in the same foster care or residential children's home placement at the end of the Miskin Intervention where the aim was to prevent the placement from breaking down.*
- *90% of children supported by IFST, where children were deemed to be at risk as a consequence of parental behaviours including drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health, and domestic violence, either remained at home or returned home to family.*
- *62.12% of children supported by TFT during 2021-22 were closed to Children Services on 01/11/2022*

Additional Service activity

Includes:

- RCT Corporate Apprentice Scheme: Miskin were again successful in their bid through the councils Corporate Apprenticeship Scheme in 2021-22, the service has embraced the Councils 'grow your own ethos' with most support workers and intervention workers having previously been apprentices.

Demand

The demand for Miskin interventions and support has never been higher, the service is consistently responding to increasing demand and working creatively to enhance that capacity whenever possible. Referrals are prioritised within regular meetings with Intensive Intervention to ensure best use of resources available as demand exceeds capacity. However, the service continues to be effective with a high percentage of those children, young people, and families that it does support.

5. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This is an information report.

6. **CONSULTATION**

6.1 This is an information report.

7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

7.1 There are no direct financial implications aligned to this report.

8. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

8.1 The legal requirements for children and young people are set down within the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Children Act 1989.

9. **LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

9.1 This consultation links to the corporate priority of promoting independence and positive lives for everyone by ensuring that the Council listens to the people it provides for.

9.2 It also contributes to the following well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A globally responsible Wales

10. **CONCLUSION**

Miskin and TFT Annual reports demonstrate the strong commitment within RCT Children's Services to achieve positive outcomes for children and families delivered by these Teams through creative innovative practice and evidence-based interventions.



The service is currently undergoing a review to ensure it provides services that meet Children's Services current and future priorities.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

24th NOVEMBER 2022

REPORT OF DIRECTOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Officer to Contact:

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Claire Williams, Head of Service: Claire.L.Williams3@rctcbc.gov.uk

Rhondda Cynon Taf Children's Services



MISKIN SERVICES

2021-22

Authors: Matthew Free
Service Manager

Sarah Longhurst/Jay Goulding
Team Practice & Performance Managers



1. About this document

1.1 This document provides outline information about Miskin Services, covering period 2021-22.

2. What is Miskin

2.1 Miskin is a set of services whose purpose are to prevent child–parent separation or placement breakdown. We do this through the deployment of evidence-based, time limited interventions which are co-produced with the family and the referring case worker. Our work can include:

- Supporting children and young people to remain living at home in their own communities with parents/family members, reducing risks to children living at home, whilst also reducing risk of child/parent separation and family breakdown.
- Supporting young people who are looked after where there is a risk of breakdown.
- Supporting reunification plans for children and young people to return home from care to live with parents/family members.
- Supporting young people to return from living in ‘out of county’ care placements to return home to parents/family members or to live more locally.

2.2 Miskin Services work co-productively with families and aim to deliver family focused evidence-based interventions, responsive to family need, supporting parents/carers/children (0-17 years of age) to improve parenting capacity and enable them to care for their children with the minimum statutory interventions.

2.3 Sitting under the Head of Service for Family Support and Accommodation, Miskin Services are managed by a Service Manager (Edge of Care & Family Support) and organised into **four** main areas (1) **Miskin Teams** (2) **Integrated Family Support Team (IFST)** (3) **Therapeutic Families Team (TFT)** (4) **Glyncornel Centre**.

2.4 **Miskin Teams** – comprises of four social work led teams that cover specific geographical areas within RCT, and are age related i.e., supporting families with children either under or over 11 years of age. The teams have a solution focused approach delivering strength-based, outcome focused whole family interventions and consist of staff with skills and training to deliver the prescribed interventions and practical support relative to the age group they support. The Miskin teams respect families as experts in their own lives, empowering them to move towards positive change, based on the needs of the family which can be achieved in timely outcome focused way.

2.5 **IFST** – is a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary team, which delivers time limited, targeted work to children and families identified by children services who most need evidence-based interventions due to parental drug and alcohol misuse, domestic violence, and parental mental health. Consisting of Social work, health and Barod staff, the team bridges gaps between services,

engaging whole families to develop safety, as a platform to engage in strengths based and relationship-based practice. The IFST also has a strong emphasis on training and developing practice across health and social care.

2.6 **TFT** – is a multi-disciplinary team offering consultation, therapeutic assessments and interventions to children, families, and professionals. Consisting of Systemic (Family) Psychotherapists and Educational Psychologists, the team receives referrals from Resilient Families, Enquiry and Assessment, Intensive Intervention, Disabled Children Teams and 16+ Teams. Educational Psychologists in Therapeutic Families Team do not offer a service to Resilient Families.

2.7 **Glyncornel House or Glyncornel Centre** – The Centre provides a valued and essential base from which teams across the Edge of Care and Family Support Service, as well as others across children services, who can undertake direct work and deliver therapeutic interventions that support children, young people, and families.

2.8 RCT has a legal duty to provide preventative services under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014), including Part 9 which makes it a requirement for the provision of Integrated Family Support Services (IFSS) to enable children to remain safely with their families and reduce the risk of them becoming looked after by the local authority. The service provides support to families in order to safeguard the welfare of their children and enable them to remain safely with their families. A key principle is that children are best looked after within their families, with parents playing a full part in their lives – unless compulsory intervention is necessary.

3. Values and Principles

The infographic below summarises our recent updated values, vision, and principles. The first and foremost value is our promotion of a child's right to a family life.



4. Miskin/IFST/TFT Interventions and Models of Practice

- 4.1 Interventions delivered by Miskin/IFST/TFT teams begin with consultation and Intervention Assessment/Report and Plan to help decide whether an intervention is necessary and which interventions will be most effective.
- 4.2 Across the Miskin/IFST/TFT all teams embody person-centred, relationship-based approaches, which draw on families' strengths and are underpinned by the core communication style of Motivational Interviewing.
- 4.3 Miskin/IFST/TFT staff draw on a range of theories and intervention models, these include.
- Safety Planning
 - Harm Reduction
 - Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
 - Eco-Mapping/family relationships/stories.
 - Trauma Recovery Model
 - Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy
 - Five to Thrive
 - Parenting Puzzle
 - Non-Violence Resistance Therapy
 - Gro Brain
 - Emotion Coaching
 - Kids Talk/Teen Talk/Parent Talk
 - Solihull Model
 - Secure Based Attachment Mode
 - CEOP/Internet Safety
 - Reality Baby
 - Outdoor Adventure Activities

There are some activities specific to each team, e.g., IFST are required to set family goals plans, which are reviewed by an independent, social work qualified practitioner.

More Than Activities

Activities, including outdoor adventure activities are a key tool used within our model of practice as a means of engaging with children and families. A rapidly growing body of evidence exists highlighting the benefits (including therapeutic benefits) of outdoor learning and play, that can lead to improved language and communication skills, motivation, independence, confidence and self-esteem, concentration, self-evaluation, creativity, and openness to new perspectives.

Outdoor adventure activities provide opportunities for children and parents/carers to develop team working skills, work on their own initiative, developing social skills and discipline to manage challenging situations, they can all transferable into everyday family life, promoting positive behavioural change and family relationships.

Activities offer an opportunity to engage young people into mainstream provision, further learning, and universal community-based services. Engaging children and young people in positive and constructive use of their time, re-engaging them in mainstream provision can reduce pressure on everyday family life and requests for children to come into care.

IFST what we do

The RCT IFST is a team of experienced staff, delivering Evidence Based Interventions (EBI) to families with complex issues to reduce risk and promote positive outcomes for children. EBI's are interventions, informed by research, which utilize elements of practice which are proven to work, when compared with social work case management models. The IFST employs a range of approaches including Motivational interviewing (MI); Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) Goal setting, safety planning, and systemic therapy models. The interventions employed by the team are promoted by Welsh Government as essential to good quality social work practice.

The IFSTs were created across Wales, to deliver a short-term intensive model of intervention. This has been adapted in RCT in recent years to meet the demands of children services. The current model of practice delivers interventions, based on the same key principles and skills, oriented by the same theories, values and skills. The IFST remains committed to the core elements of the IFST model; evidence based, person centred, goal oriented, relational, compassionate practice, which is now delivered less intensely.

TFT

The Systemic (Family) Psychotherapists apply a range of theories, beliefs and models of practice which seek to bring about new information to a system, by exploring different views to generate new perspectives. One of the strengths of systemic family therapy and systemic consultation is that it pays attention to the wider context and understands that the culture, resources, and orientation of organisations set and important tone that can either help or hinder the workforce in carrying out effective work with families (Greenwood, 2016). Within the TFT, Education Psychologists (EP's) use consultation, psychological knowledge, and therapeutic tools to support children and young people directly and/or to enable adults around them to better understand and support them.

TFT offer a range of ways to intervene with individuals, families, and professionals, these include.

- Consultation: systemic (described below) and psychological to referrers, wider professionals, children, and their families/carers.
- Individual therapy.
- Family therapy with the whole family, or parts of a family and wider family network.
- Family Consultation/Choice appointments.
- Staff group supervision.
- Psychological Assessments.

- Trauma Recovery Model and TRM Panel.
- Group work.
- Non-Violent Resistance for individual families.
- Staff training and skills workshops.

Roles within Miskin/IFST/TFT

The roles across Miskin provide a progressive and resilient structure which is integral to our delivery model. The structure supports our approach to workforce development in the recruitment and retention of staff at all levels from apprentice through to CSWs and Managers. This approach embodies the “grow your own” ethos of the council, providing a steady flow of qualified and experienced workers into our own service, as-well-as, the wider children services teams.

Consultant Social Workers (CSW’s)

The CSW role is unique in this service area of RCT. There are a broad range of responsibilities/activities which CSWs are required to undertake; these include holding complex cases (Welsh government suggest that CSWs should spend 50% of their time concerned in social work practice).

Developing capacity within Miskin/IFST and across wider children services, through the sharing of resources, consultation, coaching and mentoring. Within each Miskin/IFST team CSW’s provide line management and monthly professional supervision, leading practice developments with colleagues to respond to the needs of the families they support. The role of CSWs is integral in workforce development through delivery of training, coaching, and mentoring in the use of specific approaches. Although the undertaking of primary research has always been part of the CSW remit, since the role was established in 2010, this has continued to be an area which requires development and strategic direction. CSWs support and deputise for Team Practice and Performance Managers in their absence.

Principal Social Workers

Principal social workers support and deputise for CSW’s in their absence, provide line management and monthly professional supervision for support workers and apprentices. The majority of the principal social worker role is involved in direct work with complex cases.

Social Workers

The primary role of social workers is to deliver interventions to children and families, whilst also supporting the development of social work student placements and the mentoring of support workers and apprentices.

Intervention Workers

The primary role of intervention workers is to deliver interventions to children and families on their own caseloads.

Support Workers

The support workers primary role is to support other team members in the delivery of interventions to children and families. Support workers in Miskin are generally experienced having come through the apprentice scheme, they are supported as a development opportunity to hold their own caseload relevant to their level of experience.

Apprentices

Miskin apprenticeships provide the first step for many into the social care field. They have their own fulltime workload which is managed by qualified social work staff/Outdoor Adventure Activities Officer. The apprentice primary role is the starting point of the Miskin service “grow your own” ethos. The majority of current support worker and intervention worker positions are held by past apprentices. Miskin apprentices are now beginning to study for and qualify as social workers.

Apprentice “A” gained an apprenticeship with Miskin after working in finance as an administrative assistant for 2 years following sixth form. “A” knew they wanted to learn while earning and had always wanted to work in social care. A’s long-term goal was to become a social worker and the apprenticeship provided experience and skills to apply for a place on the social work degree. Over the two years apprenticeship, Miskin supported “A” with regular supervision and mentoring provided by the Outdoor Activities Officer and a social care mentor. “A” gained the Level 2 Social Care Induction Award and Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care. “A” was supported and nurtured to develop confidence, skills, knowledge, and experience in working with children and families. “A” was supported to attend many training courses appropriate to the role and to complement her development. “A” gained a place on the social work degree and during which time remained as a casual project worker within the Miskin and residential services teams. This allowed “A” to gain further experience while undertaking the social work degree. “A” has now completed the social work degree and has fulfilled her dream of becoming a social worker by gaining a full-time social worker position within our Childrens Services department.

IFST and TFT hold some multi-disciplinary roles specific to the function of the team. These include staff employed by Third Sector organisations (Barod), Health Visiting, and disciplines including Systemic (Family) Psychotherapists and Educational Psychologists.

5. How do families access Miskin Services?

- 5.1 All referrals to Miskin/IFST/TFT are made by the case responsible social (care) worker.
- 5.2 Referrals are received via children’s services teams, through the WCCIS system. The child and/or family must remain open to children services, for the

duration of the work, unless they are supported by Systemic (Family) Psychotherapists, who also support families in the Resilient Families service.

5.3 Referrals are reviewed by a Team Performance and Practice Manager and allocated to an appropriate team within the service.

5.4 Where demand outweighs resources available, referrals are placed on a waiting list and prioritised at weekly Children's Services Interface Meetings.

6. How well are we doing & how do we know?

6.1 Quality Assurance - In addition, to analysis of regular WCCIS performance management data reports, Miskin Services have developed a Quality Assurance Framework and associated Implementation Plan in line with the overall Childrens Services Quality Assurance Framework. The Miskin framework and plan includes monitoring and evaluating service user feedback, staff supervision, case file audits, and observed practice, all of which aims to enhance and improve practice. Audits evidence regular team meetings, regular staff supervision and case file audits are being undertaken. Although observed practice takes place throughout Miskin Services, further development of the observed practice element of this framework has seen a delay due to the need to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic.

6.2 Service User Feedback matters to us. It provides a great opportunity to help us evaluate whether we are making a difference with the children and families we support and to the professionals that refer to us. Below are some examples of feedback we have received from families.

Brain development with babies, how much information the brains take in between newborn - 2 years, how a baby's brain grows, development is affected not being in a safe happy environment. (Parent of Baby)

That they would help with everything they could to make me happy and settled. (Female 16 years)

Yes, if it weren't for Miskin being involved then my son would probably be adopted. (Parent)

Miskin has helped me turn my life around and my son has returned back to my care. (Parent)



*Your compassion, understanding, experience, your asking appropriate, reflective questions and the discussions/observations that you had at the end of the sessions (particularly with a reflecting colleague) were helpful to me. You can chalk 'Kept the ***** family together' on your success wall! (Parent supported by TFT, December 2020).*

I know that we have told you this before, but I am not sure that you fully believe it (please do) - there is no doubt in my mind that YOU, with (your colleagues) help at the start, helped prevent the family from fragmenting entirely and will lead to a far better outcome for (names of children) (in particular) than would otherwise have been the case.

It was nice to be able to sit down and talk with someone who cared, who listened, who was non-judgmental. She made me feel very comfortable. She didn't try and put the world to rights. She offered good advice which I still use and will continue to use.

We are better prepared for the needs of our other children and are actively seeking help to better equip ourselves help them.

I would like to thank my worker JS, for all the help she was able to give us to be able to keep our child. (Parent)

6.3 Below is sample of data and outcome information that the service collates and uses to evaluate the service.

Tudalen 44

How much are we doing?	How well are we doing & how do we know?																												
<p>MISKIN TEAMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2021-22, Miskin Teams received 687 new referrals and worked with 670 (97.55%) new referrals. 17 (2.47%) of referrals did not meet service criteria. 2021-22, Miskin Teams completed 483 family interventions, an increase on the previous year of 456 completed family interventions. <table border="1" data-bbox="483 775 824 1074"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>No. Referrals Worked</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2016-17</td> <td>346</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2017-18</td> <td>402</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018-19</td> <td>441</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019-20</td> <td>572</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020-21</td> <td>573</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021-22</td> <td>670</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="302 1102 1099 1361"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Length of Intervention</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2012-13</td> <td>119 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2013-14</td> <td>112 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014-15</td> <td>104 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015-16</td> <td>107 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016-17</td> <td>98 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018-19</td> <td>149 days</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	No. Referrals Worked	2016-17	346	2017-18	402	2018-19	441	2019-20	572	2020-21	573	2021-22	670	Year	Length of Intervention	2012-13	119 days	2013-14	112 days	2014-15	104 days	2015-16	107 days	2016-17	98 days	2018-19	149 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2021-22, Miskin Teams responded to an increase in number of referrals for families: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ‘experiencing crisis requiring immediate support for child/children to remain in their care’, from 147 (25.26%) to 148 (22.08%). ‘needed intensive support to prevent child/children coming into care’, from 327 (55.08%) to 377 (56.26%). 96% of children remained at home living with either parents or extended family members at the end of the Miskin Intervention where the aim was to prevent children from coming into care. An increase from 91% the previous year, but a positive outcome that has been maintained at above 89% for several years even in the face of increasing referral numbers year on year. Of the 483 completed Miskin Interventions during 2021-22, the number of children that received a Miskin Intervention based on their recorded status as of 05/08/2022 (date that Miskin statistical report was run from WCCIS) 47.61% (230) were closed to statutory Children’s Services. 79% of children 11-17 years of age remained living in the same foster care or residential children’s home placement at the end of
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2019-20	147 days							
2020-21	169 days							
2021-22	134 days							
<p>INTEGRATED FAMILY SUPPORT TEAM (IFST)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2021-22, IFST received 210 new referrals and worked with 207 (98.57%) of these referrals. The average length of an IFST Intervention in 2021-22 was 156 days. <table border="1" data-bbox="405 1214 745 1359"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>No. Referrals Worked</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2020-21</td> <td>258</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Year	No. Referrals Worked	2020-21	258	<p>Of those referrals accepted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parental Substance Misuse was a factor in 81.16% of referrals. Domestic Violence was a factor in 80.18% of referrals. Parental Mental Health was a factor in 82.13% of referrals. Parental Learning Disability was a factor in 7.25% of referrals. <p>Evidencing the level of complexity, IFST work with, sometimes described as the toxic trio when these issues co-occur.</p> <p>In 2021-22, IFST had 112 completed interventions. By the end of the IFST Intervention,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there was an increase of those children subject to Care & Support Plan Part 4 (14.29% to 33.93%). 		
Year	No. Referrals Worked							
2020-21	258							

<table border="1" data-bbox="407 193 745 233"> <tr> <td>2021-22</td> <td>207</td> </tr> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="302 268 949 381"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Length of Intervention</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2020-21</td> <td>175 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021-22</td> <td>156 days</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFST deliver training courses on the wider social care calendar (no data available due to courses not running throughout the pandemic). 	2021-22	207	Year	Length of Intervention	2020-21	175 days	2021-22	156 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a decrease in those children on the Child Protection Register 64 (57.14%) to 25 (22.32%). 106 (94.64%) of children supported by the IFST, 101 (90.18%) either remained at home or returned home to family. As Parental behaviours including drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health and domestic violence, are the reason that most children in RCT are deemed to be “at risk”, we are pleased that those children most at risk have remained with their families. Where children are looked after at the end of an intervention, we can be confident that they are safe.
2021-22	207								
Year	Length of Intervention								
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2021-22	156 days								
<p>THERAPEUTIC FAMILIES TEAM (TFT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2021-22, TFT received 220 (compared to 174 previous year) referrals and accepted 218 referrals. The average length of a TFT Intervention in 2021-22 was 144 days. <table border="1" data-bbox="302 912 949 1026"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Length of Intervention</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2020-21</td> <td>Data not available</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021-22</td> <td>144 days</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFT undertook 132 (104 previous year) TFT initial assessments. 26 (20 previous year) EP assessments including ECMs 29 (15 previous year) referrals dealt with by Consultation only, with no Initial Assessment. Services offered; Family consultation 99 (62 previous year) Whole family therapy 33 (18 previous) Individual family therapy 44 (44 previous year) Reflecting Team 7 (7 previous year) 	Year	Length of Intervention	2020-21	Data not available	2021-22	144 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Of 132 children worked with (3 were referred twice); 25 closed to children services (with 34 of those open to RFS). Child status as of 01/11/2022, 82 (62.12%) closed to Children’s Services. 		
Year	Length of Intervention								
2020-21	Data not available								
2021-22	144 days								

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TFT provide regular consultation & supervision to staff and management in RCT Children's Homes. • TFT deliver training courses on the wider social care calendar (no data available due to courses not running throughout the pandemic). 		
Who is better off?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service users in receipt of Miskin / IFST / TFT services. • Children / Young People / Parents / Carers / Extended Family members. • Foster Carers / Residential Homes – through support offered to the young people who are referred and staff through consultation and supervision, improved placement stability. • Wider Community – Our team support children and families to live fulfilled lives within their communities. • Childrens Services Teams / Professionals in Health and Education – staff in Miskin/ IFST / TFT provide training, consultation, and informal bitesize training such as going through methods of direct work/ resources. Improved recruitment and retention • Referrers into Miskin / IFST / TFT - Supporting them to improve outcomes for children 		

- Placement Team – supporting and maintaining placement stability for children / young people will reduce the demand, urgency, and cost for alternative placements.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

24TH NOVEMBER 2022

REGIONAL ADOPTION COLLABORATION ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Corporate Parenting Board members with the Annual Regional Adoption Collaboration Annual Report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the information contained within the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This is an information report.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) is the largest of the five regional collaboratives which form part of the National Adoption Service in Wales (NAS). It provides a regional adoption service to the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cardiff Council and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council. The service is hosted by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.
- 4.2 This is VVC's seventh annual report and covers the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2022. The Collaborative is required to review the service it provides by regulation, and as part of the reporting requirements set out in the legal agreement underpinning the operation of the collaborative. The report seeks to combine the various reporting requirements in one report.
- 4.4 The report is attached at Appendix 1 with data appendices 1-4 also included as follows:
 - Appendix 1 sets out key performance data in respect of children by quarter and local authority.

- Appendix 2 provides information in respect of adopter enquiries and recruitment of adopters.
- Appendix 3 provides information in respect of Adoption Support.
- Appendix 4 provides information in respect of Adoption Panel activity.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This is an information report.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 This is an information report.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 There are no direct financial implications aligned to this report.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 The report was brought before Scrutiny as part of the governance arrangements outlined in Regulation 22 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (Wales) Regulations 2007 and section 15(c) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Regulations) (Wales) Directions 2015.

9 LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

9.2 The business covered in this report contributes to the following well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A globally responsible Wales

10 CONCLUSION;

10.1 During the period, the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) approved a significant pool of adopters with the result that more children can be placed within the region. The need however, to continue to recruit more adopters for more complex children remains a priority for VVC.

- 10.2 At the end of the reporting period, the service is able to report a healthy level of performance despite the constraints imposed upon service delivery during COVID -19.
- 10.3 Adoption Support represents a large set of challenges for VVC and the need to reduce the waiting list for services and to ensure that the service is targeted to those most in need remain a priority.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

24TH NOVEMBER 2022

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VALE, VALLEYS, AND CARDIFF ADOPTION COLLABORATIVE REVIEW OF SERVICE AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

For Period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2022

NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE



**Achieving More Together /
Cyflawni Mwy Gyda'n Gilydd**

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VALE, VALLEYS, AND CARDIFF ADOPTION COLLABORATIVE (VVC) ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1st APRIL 2021 to 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** Vale, Valleys, and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) as part of the National Adoption Service in Wales (NAS), provides a regional adoption service to the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cardiff Council and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council.
- 1.2** This is VVC's seventh annual report and covers the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2022. The report has been extended to cover the first six months of this reporting year to incorporate the requirement to review the service under Regulation 39 of the Local Authority Adoption Services (Wales) Regulations 2019. It also incorporates the reporting requirements set out in the governance arrangements for the region in one report. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided is an accurate record of the activity and quality of the adoption service.
- 1.3** The report has the following Appendices:

Appendix 1 sets out key performance data in respect of children by quarter and local authority.

Appendix 2 provides information in respect of adopter enquiries and recruitment of adopters.

Appendix 3 provides information in respect of Adoption Support.

Appendix 4 provides information in respect of Adoption Panel activity.

2. SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

- 2.1** The organisational and managerial structure of the service has remained unchanged during this period with service delivery structured around Family Finding, Recruitment & Assessment, Adoption Support and Business Support.
- 2.2** The context for service delivery during a significant part of the reporting period has been the global pandemic and the impact this has had upon the way services are delivered. VVC's office has largely remained closed during this time with the majority of staff working from home. Some Business Support staff have continued to work from the office to carry out core tasks and staff utilise the office for specific purposes and to improve work life balance. Due to the geographical spread of the region staff had been used to agile working and so have adapted well to the hybrid mix of face to face and virtual working arrangements. Office working was subject to a risk assessment process during COVID -19, but this has been relaxed as national restrictions have eased.
- 2.3** Despite the restrictions the service has continued to face increased demands, particularly in relation Adoption Support. These pressures are set against an ever-increasing national agenda and the implementation of the NAS Good Practice Guides during 2021-22. A review of capacity issues and the impact of the implementation of the new initiatives upon service delivery was undertaken in April 2021 and presented to VVC Management Board. The report contained an options appraisal for additional resources to meet the increased demand in the immediate, medium, and longer term. These options were further considered by the regional Heads of Service in July & September 2021. Additional investment to employ 2.5 Social Care Officers within the Adoption Support Team and additional capacity within the Business Support Team was agreed and was submitted as part of the cost pressures process in each of the four authorities.

- 2.4** Quarterly meetings of VVC's Management Board have continued to be held and twice-yearly meetings of the Joint Committee. An additional Joint Committee meeting was convened in September 2021 to consider the proposals to meet the capacity pressures prior to the budget setting process.
- 2.5** The budget for the Collaborative is managed by the Vale of Glamorgan and is monitored closely by the Management Board and approved by the Joint Committee. Due to the vacancy position and revenue generated by VVC adopters being utilised by external agencies, the end of year position reported a significant underspend in the budget for 2021-22. A proposal to retain the underspend within VVC was agreed by Management Board and Joint Committee. These monies are being allocated to provide additional Adoption Support services, independent assessments, and the regional contribution to the TESSA programme.
- 2.6** VVC 's financial and governance arrangements are subject to an annual audit by Bridgend and Vale Internal Audit Shared Service. This audit was conducted remotely in May 2022 and recommended "Reasonable Assurance as a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control were in place". The areas for improvement which were identified related to the financial process in respect of purchasing cards and the need to review VVC's WASPI/ISP. An action plan in respect of the audit recommendations has been developed and an update against the plan has recently been provided for the auditor.
- 2.7** There has been no change to the membership of the Management Board during this period although the membership of the Joint Committee changed in May 2022 following the local elections. This caused a delay in convening the meeting scheduled for May 2022 and so a combined meeting of VVC Management Board and Joint Committee took place in July 2022. The Directors for the partner authorities also attended this meeting.
- 2.8** The Operational Group has continued to meet although competing demands placed upon local authority representatives and managerial gaps within VVC has impacted upon frequency of meetings and quoracy. As a result of this the terms of reference for

the Operational Group have been revised and agreed by Management Board to allow a quoracy of three officers from the partner authorities and an agreed mechanism for agreeing matters outside the meeting where one partner authority is absent. A joint Heads of Service & Operational Group meeting was held in June 2022 to look at Adoption Support issues and a further meeting of the Operational Group was held in September 2022 enabling the schedule of meetings to resume.

- 2.9** The agendas for all these levels of regional governance have remained full, incorporating a range of matters including budget approval, performance reporting, setting service priorities and relevant aspects from the national agenda. IPC attended the July 2021 meeting of the Management Board to present the regional findings in respect of IPC'S Evaluation of the Adoption Support Framework.
- 2.10** The service has continued to comply with all required performance monitoring and reporting to the National Adoption Service (NAS). Internal data collection systems have been adapted to incorporate the increased range of measures required to support the two-stage model of adopter assessment and the new raft of adoption support measures which will be collected from October 2022. The Regional Manager has been part of a working group initiated by Western Bay to develop the adoption modules for WCCIS. These have now been completed and work is underway to build them into the national system. Meetings have been held locally to begin the process of VVC transferring their record system onto WCCIS once the new system is live.
- 2.11** The Regional Manager and Team Managers remain active participants in national forums and subgroups. The Regional Manager attends monthly meetings for Regional Adoption Managers facilitated by NAS and monthly meetings which involve representatives from the voluntary adoption agencies. In addition, the Head of Service for the Vale of Glamorgan, as host authority and the Regional Manager attend bi - monthly meetings with other regional and national leads to plan the business delivery of the national service from a regional perspective. In 2021 the Regional Manager contributed to the development of NAS guidance in respect of the transfer of Adoption Support cases at the three-year point post Adoption Order. The Recruitment &

Assessment Manager was also part of a national group developing NAS' Welsh Early Permanence Strategy.

3. Staffing

- 3.1** The overall staffing establishment remained the same during 2021, although there has been some staff turnover in all teams. Within the Recruitment & Assessment Team, three experienced Social Workers began their maternity leave during 2021 and another experienced full-time member of staff changed roles to fill a vacancy in the Adoption Support Team. Attempts to fill all these vacancies were unsuccessful although a temporary part time appointment was made to fill one of the positions. Slippage monies were therefore allocated to buy in independent support to assist with some of the assessment work within the team especially in respect of non- agency applications.
- 3.2** Within the Adoption Support Team, an experienced member of staff left at the beginning of the period to take up a post within NAS Central Team although this position was filled via internal transfer. Some agency cover has been provided to address some of the pressures within the team funded from the reserves.
- 3.3** In terms of the specialist posts funded from the 2019 Welsh Government investment for adoption services, the service monitors any movement of staff within these posts carefully to ensure that gaps are covered quickly, and performance is maintained. The Regional Adoption Manager completed six monthly returns to NAS during 2021-22 to report upon the performance of the region in relation to these posts to ensure continuation of the funding.
- 3.4** As a result of the discussions concerning capacity within the service regional partners agreed to some additional investment to support the work of the Adoption Support Team and to review the structure of the Business Support Team to take effect from April 2022. The new Social Care Officer posts have been created and recruited to and work is underway to reconfigure posts within the Business Support Team to provide additional capacity.

3.5 Similar to other services, VVC experienced a number of staff contracting COVID -19 during this period requiring periods of absence from work alongside a couple of staff on long-term absence. This was carefully monitored by the service and appropriate support systems were put in place.

4. SERVICE FUNCTIONS

4.1. Performance against each of the service functions is outlined under the following sections of the report alongside areas of development.

5. FAMILY FINDING

5.1 Family Finding and its' associated activities remains a key area of activity for the region and the ability to place children effectively and promptly underpins all other activities.

5.2 The number of children referred for adoption totalled **155**. Over the past three years referral levels have shown slight fluctuation with an increase in 2020-21 which reduced again in 2021-22 but overall remain fairly stable. Nationally there is a trend towards a decrease in the number of children referred for adoption and therefore this will need to be monitored in 2022-23 for any noticeable reduction.

5.3 **48%** of children referred to VVC were withdrawn and did not require a plan of adoption which positively shows alternative Care Plans have been put in place for those children. This figure is an increase from the 43% of referrals withdrawn in the previous year and may reflect the work being undertaken by local authorities to reduce the number of children needing to be 'looked after'. As noted in previous years, withdrawn referrals in many instances do not equate to a decrease in workload for the service as a lot of work is undertaken to progress the adoption process prior to it being discontinued, particularly from administrative roles within VVC.

5.4 The number of 'Should be Adopted' decisions made in respect of children increased during this year to **90** (from the 80 and 81 in previous years). This is to be expected in

line with a higher number of referrals during 2020-21 which resulted in 'SBA' decisions within that year and in 2021-22.

- 5.5** The region has recorded **79** Placement Orders being made within the year, which shows an increase from figures in the past couple of years and which would be expected in line with increased referrals and Should be Adopted decisions. It is anticipated that this figure will continue to fluctuate but not significantly from this level based upon the number of referrals received during 2021-22. Should referral rates significantly decline there will be a noticeable impact on the number of Placement Orders granted.
- 5.6** VVC placed **85** children for adoption during the year which is a considerable increase from the 65 of the previous year. This would seem in line both with an increase in Placement Orders but also the successful recruitment of adopters undertaken by the region. Planning for placements in the early part of 2021-22 had to take into account Covid-19 risk assessments but as the year progressed this became less of a necessity. Due to the careful planning of Social Workers within the service the additional demands around Covid-19 have not caused significant delay in placing children for adoption.
- 5.7** Just **34%** of children matched with adopters waited more than the benchmark of 6 months from Should be Adopted decision to matching which is positive and reflects the increased availability of adopters within the region. VVC continues to place a high proportion of our children with VVC approved adopters (**72%**) maintaining a similar level to recent years.
- 5.8** At the end of the March 2022 there were **51** children on Placement Orders awaiting an adoptive placement (down from 63 in the previous year). Of these 17 had active links and went on to be matched with adopters during Q1 of 2022-23. It is positive to see a continued decrease in the number of children waiting for adoptive placements.

- 5.9** There were **80** Adoption Orders granted during the year which is a continued pattern from previous years. There were no placements which disrupted during 2021-22 which is hugely encouraging.
- 5.10** Performance in relation to the provision of Life Journey Material for children being placed for adoption has improved considerably over recent years and is 100% at matching and 90% of final materials at the 2nd adoption review. There remain some challenges for the capacity of Social Workers within the local authorities to finalise the later life letters for children which affects the 2nd review performance. The Life Journey Work Co-ordinators are developing further training and guidance to assist in improving the quality of the materials provided as well as on how to support local authority Social Workers to achieve 100% compliance. As a region we will be exploring the impact of the new performance indicators for 2022-23 in relation to life journey work which form part of the new measures to be collected from October 2022.
- 5.11** The Life Journey Work Co-ordinator post is now shared between two part-time workers due to the previous Co-ordinator leaving the post in autumn 2021. The Co-ordinators offer regular support, advice, and guidance to the Life Journey Work Practitioners within our partner authorities and in addition offer workshops/briefings to local authority teams. The Life Journey Work Co-ordinators support the allocation process within each authority and monitor performance across the region. The Co-ordinators are developing an Improvement Plan to support both improvement in measurable performance and in qualitative feedback on the materials themselves.
- 5.12** During 2021-22 the Transitions Worker supported **40** children through a combination of direct work, support for foster carers and adopters and completion of Trauma Nurture Timeline reports. Transitions support is provided for all our children aged 3+ and has become integral to the service that we offer and to our ability to provide an enhanced level of support to children moving on to adoption. The demand on this service over the past year has meant that priority has had to be given to the direct work needed for children and other aspects of the role have had to wait longer e.g., training and Understanding the Child Days. VVC has continued to review the impact

of the expectations from NAS Good Practice Guides and consider the capacity implications for our service.

- 5.13** VVC has continued to embrace the use of all available family finding methods over the year. The team liaises closely with the Adoption Register Wales (ARW)/LinkMaker team to ensure information is updated and monitored in a timely manner. We have been able to participate in national profiling events and an Activity Day over the past year. During 2021-22 we continued to refer children into the Adopting Together Scheme although the one match identified through this scheme could not proceed until the start of 2022-23 due to a legal challenge made by birth parents.

Family Finding Performance 1 April 2021 -30 September 2022

- 5.14** The number of children referred for adoption during the first six months of 2022-23 is **73**. If this trend continues for the remainder of this reporting year this will place referrals on a similar trend to previous years. Whilst nationally there has been a decrease in referrals into adoption this doesn't appear to be reflected regionally within VVC.
- 5.15** It is too early to consider the rate of children referred who have been withdrawn as many of these children are still within care proceedings and so the plan for adoption could change. In previous years this has been between 43-48% of referrals.
- 5.16** To date **34** 'Should be Adopted' decisions have been made. This could reflect a slight decline in the number of 'Should be Adopted' decisions for the year if this figure were doubled in the second 6 months however it is too early to draw any conclusions. Likewise, the region has recorded **33** Placement Orders being made which is in line with the number of 'Should be Adopted' decisions and rate of referrals. Should referral rates significantly decline there will be a noticeable impact on the number of Placement Orders granted.
- 5.17** VVC has placed **28** children for adoption during the year to date. There has been a slight reduction in Placement Orders over recent years which would result in less children requiring placement for adoption. However, family finding and matching

activity for the start of Quarter 3 is scheduled to be very busy and therefore we anticipate a higher rate of placements during Quarter 3.

- 5.18** 48% of children matched with adopters during the year to date waited more than the benchmark of 6 months from Should be Adopted decision to matching. This does however include a sibling group of 4 who were placed with in-house adopters, and which slightly inflate the figure. 75% of children placed this year so far have been placed with in-house adopters.
- 5.19** As at the end of September 2022 there were **53** children waiting for an adoptive placement. 20 of those children have an 'active link' defined as the matching meeting having taken place and the matching panel having been booked. 3 children have an alternative care plan being pursued where they will be remaining with their current foster carers and for 1 child's foster carers are currently being assessed as prospective adopters, albeit not defined as yet as an 'active link'. Therefore, there are 29 children still waiting for a link, 22 of which had their Placement Orders within the last 6 months.
- 5.20** There were **41** Adoption Orders granted within the first 6 months of 2022-23 which is a continued pattern from previous years. There have been no placements which disrupted during 2022-23 which is hugely encouraging. One match did not proceed to placement due to a sudden change in personal circumstances for the adopter during the introductory period.
- 5.21** Performance in relation to the provision of Life Journey Material for children being placed for adoption has been maintained at a similar level.
- 5.22** During the first 6 months of the year our Transitions worker has supported **30** children through a combination of direct work, support for foster carers and adopters and completion of Trauma Nurture Timeline reports. Some of these children were referred in 2021-22 and so work has continued into 2022-23 and 11 of these have been new referrals in this year.

- 5.23** As indicated earlier one child was placed in the first quarter of 2022-23 under Adopting Together and a further match for a sibling group of two under is being considered.
- 5.24** One child has also recently been placed under a Welsh Early Permanence arrangement which allows the adopters to foster the child prior to the plan for adoption being agreed.

6. RECRUITMENT AND ASSESSMENT

Marketing

- 6.1** For the past few years, VVC's Marketing and Recruitment Strategy has continued to focus on raising the profile of the service and helping the public see the Collaborative as very much their first choice when they are exploring adoption. This has been achieved by ensuring VVC has a physical and virtual presence. The Recruitment and Marketing Officer's role remains essential in ensuring the service develops both platforms to continue to raise VVC's profile.
- 6.2** During 2021 -22, VVC utilised the opportunity to include an information insert into the Council Tax mail drops for all residents of Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. Unfortunately, the Council Tax Team serving the Vale of Glamorgan confirmed they were not able to assist us for this particular year. Shortly after residents received the inserts, the service saw a small increase in the number of enquiries quoting the fact that they had received our details in the post, and this had prompted their enquiry. It is hoped that this type of marketing will serve as a reference point should individuals wish to consider adoption in the future.
- 6.3** As a result of COVID restrictions, the service continued to face challenges in exploring opportunities to attend in-person marketing events but as the restrictions have eased VVC has begun to focus upon some in person events. In August VVC were able to have a stand at the Vale of Glamorgan show. In addition, members of VVC staff assisted and represented the service at this year's National Eisteddfod of Wales. VVC also supported the national service in having a presence at this year's Cardiff Pride. Two of the three adoptive parents who participated in the Pride adoption discussion

were VVC adopters. More recently, VVC's Recruitment & Assessment Manager was interviewed live on BBC Radio Wales for an afternoon segment promoting adoption. All of these events have led to positive engagement with the public and supports the goal of raising the general awareness of the service.

- 6.4** Our Marketing Officer remains proactive in ensuring posters and physical information promoting the service is being displayed in high footfall areas across the region. In addition to physical advertising, VVC has utilised social media. VVC has active Instagram and Facebook accounts where we encourage existing adoptive families to remain engaged with us along with buying pay-per-click advertising. The service has experienced positive engagement through these platforms and the reach of the pay-per-click advertising is substantial.
- 6.5** Looking ahead, VVC intends to revisit the Council Tax inserts for all four local authorities, to continue building on our social media presence and explore all appropriate opportunities to attend in-person community events. To date the strategy appears to be working as over half of our enquirers continue to be members of the community who come direct to the service via our website.

Recruitment of Adopters

- 6.6** VVC received a total of **369** enquiries during 2021-22. This is a decrease when compared to the previous reporting year (377) but an increase when compared to 2019-20 (336). A reduction in the number of enquires has been reported by the other four regional Collaboratives and it is now a pattern being observed by our enquiry numbers for the first six months of 2022-23 where 98 enquiries were received compared with 165 for the same period last year.
- 6.7** VVC continues to maintain a well-established and professional tracking system whereby a response to all enquiries is made within five working days (typically within 1 working day). When tracking enquiries, as much information as possible is captured to understand the enquirer's circumstances and how they heard about our service. Every enquiry is followed up by the Marketing Officer on three occasions (within the first week, followed by 1 month and 6 months).

- 6.8** Whilst neither VVC nor the national service have commissioned any research into understanding the reasons behind the reduction, it is suspected that a number of factors are pertinent e.g., the cost of living and fuel crisis could be leading to people being more cautious about beginning the process at such an uncertain time. As part of the monitoring of enquiries, reasons for non-progression are recorded in order to better understand the decline in enquiries.
- 6.9** During 2021-22 the Collaborative hosted nine virtual Information Evenings for prospective applicants. These events were delivered remotely by VVC's Recruitment and Assessment Manager and Marketing Officer. 113 households attended these events and feedback received has continued to be positive. This represents a small decrease in the number of households that attended an Information Evening when compared to the previous year (136 households).
- 6.10** Since April 2022, five virtual Information Evenings have been held with a total of 50 households attending. This again represents a decrease when compared to the same period last year as 73 households attended. This is unsurprising given the reduction in the number of enquiries.
- 6.11** Since January 2021 VVC's virtual Preparation to Adopt training course has been jointly delivered with one of our neighbouring adoption collaboratives, Western Bay and a member of staff from VVC. This collaboration has worked well, as it affords applicants greater flexibility in attendance. The feedback regarding the course content and delivery is universally positive. In order to enable participants to build networks with other participants, a WhatsApp group has been set up for VVC participants which enables them to remain connected if they chose to do so.
- 6.13** The course was held on nine occasions during the last reporting year and on four occasions during the past six months. One course was cancelled due to this being scheduled for the same date as the state funeral of Queen Elizabeth II.

- 6.14** During 2021-22 59 VVC households attended the preparation training. Out of these 59, four withdrew following the training as they no longer felt adoption was the right choice for them. A further four applicants withdrew during the assessment process. Reasons included ill-health, change of mind, and change of circumstances.
- 6.15** In addition to the Preparation to Adopt training course, the service also offers a bespoke second-time adopters 1-day training course. This course is scheduled when there are sufficient number of attendees. When numbers are insufficient to hold the training, individual assessing social workers weave the topics and themes covered in the training into their assessment sessions.
- 6.16** During the first six months of this reporting year, one further second time adopter training course has been held with a total of six households attending. One of these households withdrew following the training citing they felt they needed more time to reflect before deciding to adopt again.
- 6.17** During 2021-22 **64** adopter approvals were recommended by VVC's Adoption Panel with **59** of those recommendations being ratified by the Head of Service at 31 March 2022. This represents a small decrease when compared to previous year's performance where **66** approvals were ratified. Despite the reduction, this remains a significant number of approvals and is a pleasing outcome given the restrictions upon service delivery.
- 6.18** These approvals are broken down as follows, **25** RCT, **19** Cardiff, **9** Vale of Glamorgan, **3** Merthyr Tydfil and **3** other (**2** Bridgend and **1** Powys). Of those approved **45** were first time adopters, **12** were second time adopters and **2** foster carers were assessed for children already residing in their care.
- 6.19** The majority of the applicants approved during 2021-22 have been linked with children from within the region. Two families have been matched with children from other areas, one from North Wales and the second Wiltshire. Two applicants withdrew post their approval due to a change in their circumstances. As indicated under the family finding section, a significant number of VVC children have been placed with in-house

adopters. However, due to the reduction in the number of children waiting, VVC has accrued a significant of approved adopters who awaiting a suitable match. This trend has been noted across Wales and is being monitored by NAS.

- 6.20** During the first six months of 2022-23 **30** approvals were recommended by VVC Adoption Panel with **26** being ratified to date.
- 6.21** On 1st April 2019 changes to the Adoption Agency Regulations came into force introducing a two-stage model of adopter assessment. Due to the pandemic Welsh Government allowed for an easement to the Regulations during 2020 enabling the two stages to run together. The temporary easement came to an end on 30 September 2021 and since 1st October 2021 any new enquiries are managed under the new model. The new way of working and tighter timescales are being closely monitored and reported upon. A more accurate picture of compliance with the model will be available during second half of the reporting year.

7. ADOPTION SUPPORT

- 7.1** Referrals into the service for Post Adoption Support services and requests for assessment of Post Adoption needs have stabilised during the period when compared with the later part of the previous reporting year. **69** new referrals were received during this period when compared with **92** received during the preceding year demonstrating a **25%** decrease in service demand. During the first half year 2022-23 **32** new referrals have been received. However, the nature of these referrals are increasingly more complex and therefore require more staff resource.
- 7.2** Referrals for Access to Birth Records for adopted adults have also stabilised during the period with a total of **34** referrals being received. There has also been a continuation in requests for information under the Post Commencement Regulations 2005 as a number of those enquirers have reached 18 years of age. **21** referrals for Intermediary Services have also been received. During the first half of 2022-23, **29**

referrals to Access to Birth Records and Intermediary Services have been received demonstrating a significant rise.

- 7.3** Due to a pre-existing backlog of work, there is a waiting list for all Adoption Support services. Work has however been undertaken with the team to review the current workload and the role and remit of the service. An audit of caseloads is being undertaken. A triage process and a case priority system has been introduced into the service to ensure that critical cases are allocated.
- 7.4** The team has continued to be proactive in seeking alternative means of supporting families with a monthly virtual quiz, a monthly toddler group and the development of a birth parent support group.
- 7.5** By utilising some monies from the reserves, VVC was able to commission an NVR course for 20 families facilitated by Adoption UK during the year. Two courses on the Circle of Security have also been facilitated by an agency worker and team member. The service piloted a Welsh Language Support Group for Welsh speaking adopters facilitated by an external facilitator which will now be adopted at a national level. In addition, the ENFYS Psychology service for Cardiff and Vale offers Nurturing & Attachment courses which families have been able to access.
- 7.6** Due to the lifting of restrictions, VVC was able to support a programme of Easter activities for young people supported by the Children and Young Person's Co-ordinator and a successful family fun day was held for over **80** families in July 2022.
- 7.7** The grant funded posts are continuing to be embedded into the region and to enhance the overall service provision maintaining positive links with national counterparts. The Birth Parent Adviser has been proactive in developing a range of support mechanisms for birth parents. This however is a part-time role and the capacity to further develop this work is currently under consideration.
- 7.8** The TESSA Co-ordinator's role has had a positive impact on supporting lower priority needs. The Co-ordinator undertakes assessments of need and processes referrals of

families who may be eligible for the service. **67** referrals have been made to TESSA by VVC during the period April 2021 to September 2022 which is one of the highest in Wales. The role has also been important in sign-posting families to other relevant services.

- 7.9** The Children and Young People Co-ordinator has continued to be directly involved in supporting Adoption UK Connected groups on a monthly basis with staff from the Connected service. These groups have returned to face-to-face meetings. The service caters for adopted children and young people 7 upwards, **83** children and young people from VVC are registered with the service. In addition, the postholder provides direct support sessions to children within the region and has also supports direct contact sessions for adopted children.
- 7.10** The NAS Good Practice Guides place a number of expectations upon the service to continue to improve Adoption Support services. One aspect is the requirement to undertake check in visits with adopters and birth parents post Adoption Order. The service is developing a process whereby this can be delivered a year after the Adoption Order has been granted and at the three-year point. It is envisaged that the newly appointed Social Care Officers will assist with this process and the support to birth parents will be linked to the post adoption contact service. In addition, NAS has developed a strategic plan, Adopt Cymru 2025 which details several objectives to improve adoption support services. This plan will form the basis of the regional business plan going forward but will require additional resource to enable the objectives to be met.
- 7.11** A new service, MAPPS, has been introduced within RCT and Merthyr Tydfil in conjunction with Health and an independent provider to provide therapeutic support for children. Requests for therapeutic support packages for adopted families are now being considered by this service.
- 7.12** VVC does not manage a budget for the provision of adoption support services although undertakes assessments of support needs which may recommend an adoption support package to the respective authority where the adoptive family resides. The

budgets to support such provision is held in the respective local authority. The total expenditure on adoption support services for the reporting year was **£186,484.95** which covers **90** children. The average spent per child has increased to **£2072** per child, although this only represents **24 %** of children who are being supported by the team.

7.13 The Operational Group has discussed increasing demand for therapeutic services for adoptive families and additional mechanisms to screen the assessments are being put in place to ensure that families receive the best outcomes.

8. ADOPTION PANEL

- 8.1** VVC continues to manage a central list of Adoption Panel members. In terms of practical delivery, Panel sittings are scheduled four times a month and are currently held virtually.
- 8.2** The workload of the Panel remains high, and the new national templates have increased case preparation time for Panel members. During the eighteen-month period, **126** cases were heard.
- 8.3** During the past eighteen months, VVC has been proactive in recruiting several new Panel members, with a particular focus upon increasing representation of adoptive parents and adopted people. There is an ongoing need to increase our Social Worker membership from our partner authorities whilst recognising that workload constraints often prohibit this.
- 8.4** Panel member training has been restarted and a course was held in September 2022 facilitated by AFA Cymru for Panel chairs and members. Other national training opportunities have been offered to Panel members on the Good Practice Guides and Welsh Early Permanence.
- 8.5** As part of the recent audit, DBS checks for all Panel members are being updated and a programme of annual reviews is scheduled.

9. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

- 9.1** Two complaints have been received during this period. One complaint was from an adoptive parent concerned about the availability of services to support her adopted son. The second complaint was from an adoptive parent concerned about the level of therapeutic support available for her child. Both complaints were investigated and resolved at Stage 1.
- 9.2** Regional staff have continued to receive positive feedback on the range of services they provide from a range of sources: service users, local authority colleagues, other agencies, and the Adoption Panel. Staff are encouraged to collate this information, as contribution to their own personal development plans.

10. Consultation, Engagement and Quality Assurance

- 10.1** An ongoing priority for the service has been to develop our quality assurance framework. VVC managers have been working closely with the Vale of Glamorgan's Quality Assurance Officer in devising robust service user questionnaires. These are being used in order to gain the feedback of service users and to listen to the views on the areas for improvement. VVC has a well-established mechanism to gain the views of service users from the point of enquiry to attending our preparation training and reports are now being collated and the findings are shared with the service. Questionnaires have also been developed post placement and following the Adoption Order which are also now being collated. Going forward there is a need to seek constructive feedback at the point of approval which will provide reflections upon the assessment process, preparation, and Panel experience.
- 10.2** In terms of Adoption Support, evaluation of the service has continued at key points of delivery and the TESSA Co-ordinator has developed a questionnaire for all families in receipt of TESSA which complements the evaluation being undertaken at a national

level. Recent discussions have taken place with the Quality Assurance Officer to agree the best mechanism to undertake check-ins with birth parents.

11. Policies and Procedures

- 11.1** At the end of 2020-21, VVC undertook an audit of policies and procedures to contribute to the work being commissioned at a national level by NAS to develop a common suite of policies for the service. This work is nearing completion.
- 11.2** The Family Finding Manager has developed a Matching Guide for practitioners which is based upon the Good Practice Guide and relevant research. This Guide has been disseminated to Childcare Teams across the region. A risk assessment tool has been developed to consider facilitating direct a contact session between prospective adopters and birth parents.
- 11.3** In addition, the service has begun to utilise some of the new processes contained in the Good Practice guides such the Trauma Nurture Timeline and the revised Adoption Support Plan.

12. CONCLUSION, FUTURE PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES

- 12.1** At the end of the reporting period, the service is able to report a healthy level of performance despite the constraints imposed upon service delivery during COVID - 19. Staff have demonstrated an ability to adapt to change and yet also focus upon core tasks. In terms of the placement for children a significant number have been placed in a timely way and there are less children waiting. The region has not experienced a marked reduction in referrals for adoption as apparent in other areas, but this will be continue to be monitored closely on a regional and national basis. Similarly, VVC has also been able to approve a significant pool of adopters during this time with the result that more children can be placed within the region. The need however, to continue to recruit more adopters for our more complex children remains a priority for VVC whilst at the same time managing the

expectations of those adopters waiting. The reduction in enquiries to adopt again will need to be monitored carefully to ensure that the service can respond proactively and remain innovative in order to attract the best families.

- 12.2** Going forward Adoption Support probably represents the biggest set of challenges for VVC. The requirement to build robust Adoption Support plans for children with ongoing support as needed and for this to underpin our core offer for adopters does impact upon our ability to adequately resource these requirements. The need to reduce our waiting list for services and to ensure that our service is targeted to those most in need remain a priority.
- 12.3** The requirement to develop Adoption Support services is set against a backdrop of an ever-increasing national improvement agenda. The full implementation of the NAS Good Practice Guides places new expectations upon the way services work with adopters, birth parents and children and young people both pre and post adoption. The full impact of these new ways of working will need to be monitored and evaluated. The appointment of the Social Care Officers within the service provides the region with an exciting opportunity to meet some of these expectations especially in terms of follow up with adoptive families and birth parents post adoption and so their roles will need to be developed to meet these expectations. Meeting the objectives laid out in the NAS Adopt Cymru 2025 does also place other expectations upon the service which will have to be evaluated so that gaps in meeting these objectives can be identified.

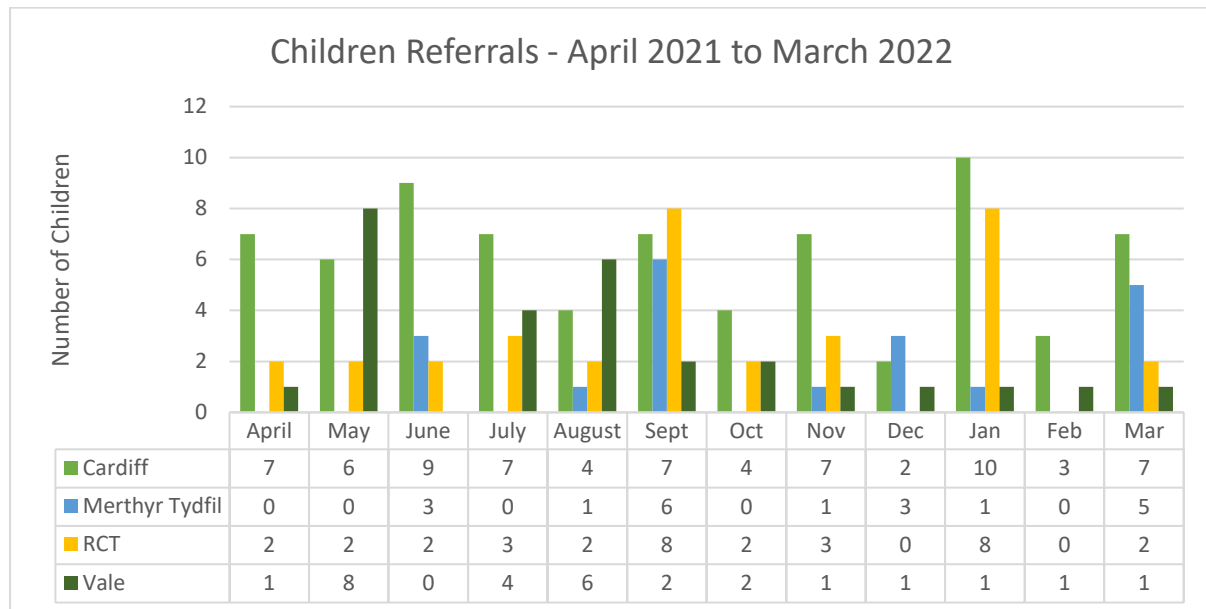
Angela Harris
Regional Adoption Manager

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Appendix 1 – Family Finding

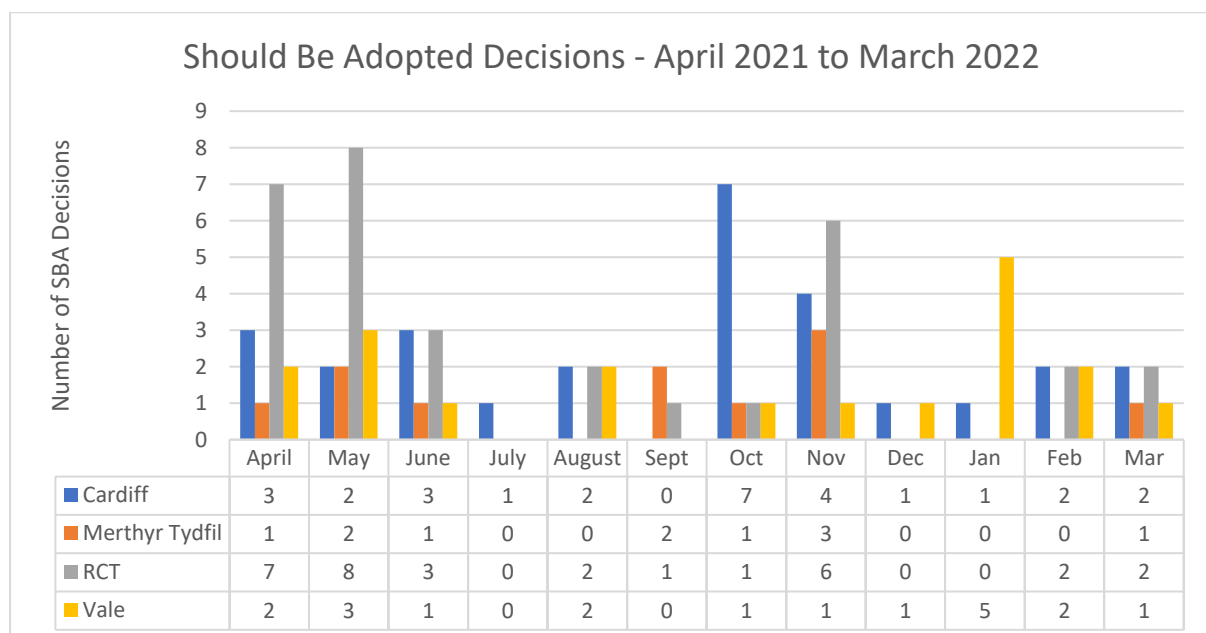
Referrals

155 children have been referred to the service since April 2021.



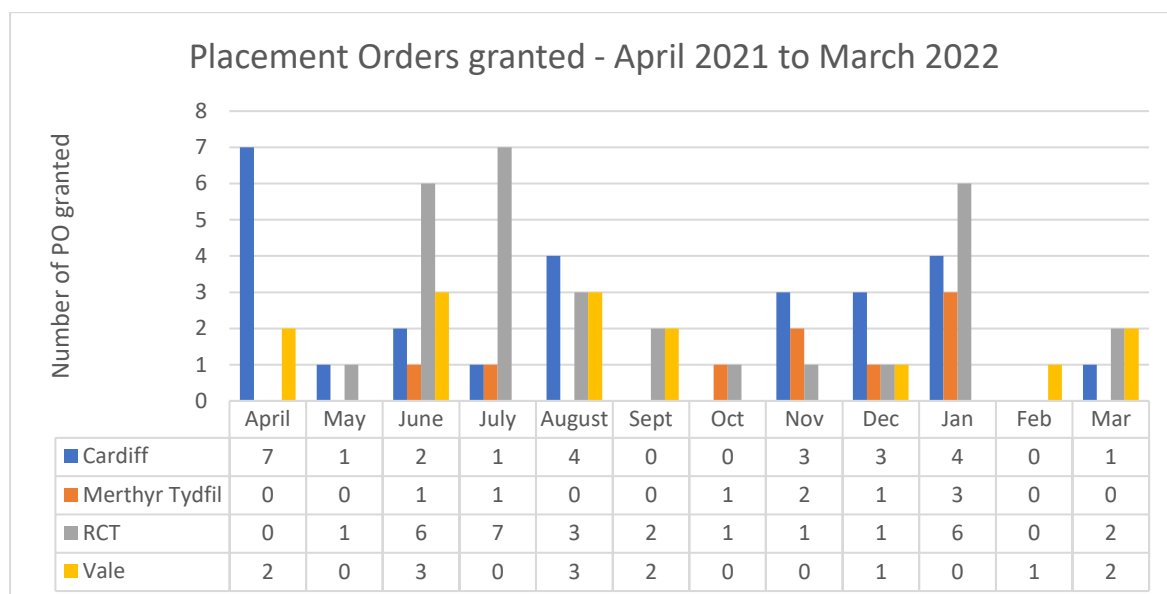
Should be Adopted Decisions

90 SBA decisions have been made during the reporting period.



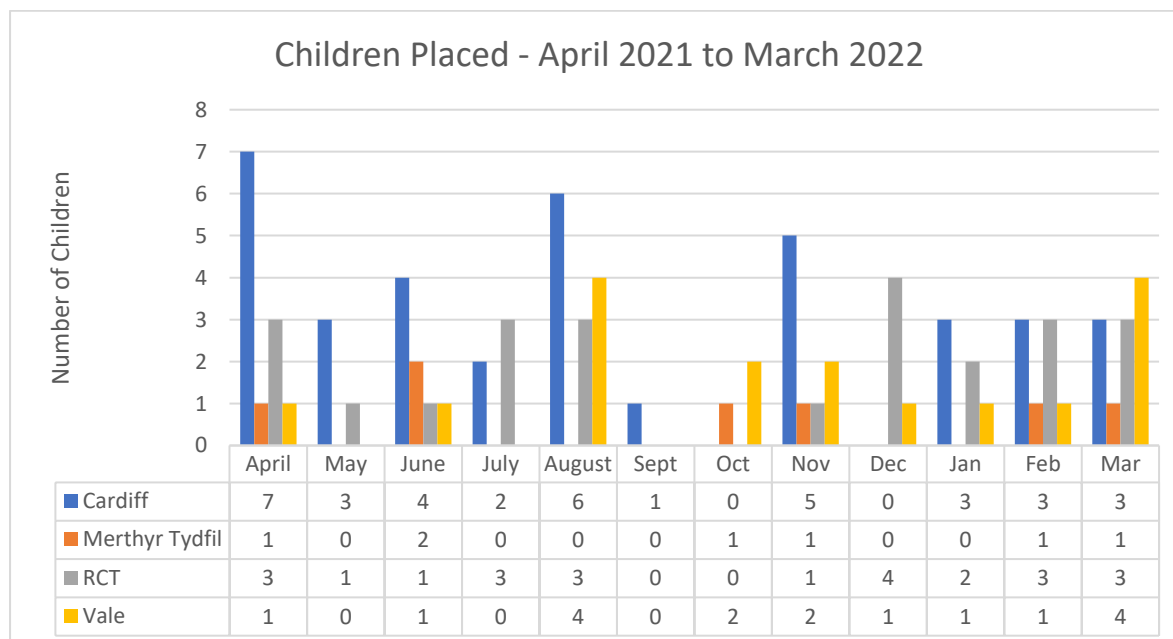
Placement Orders

79 Placement Orders were granted in the period April 2021 to March 2022.



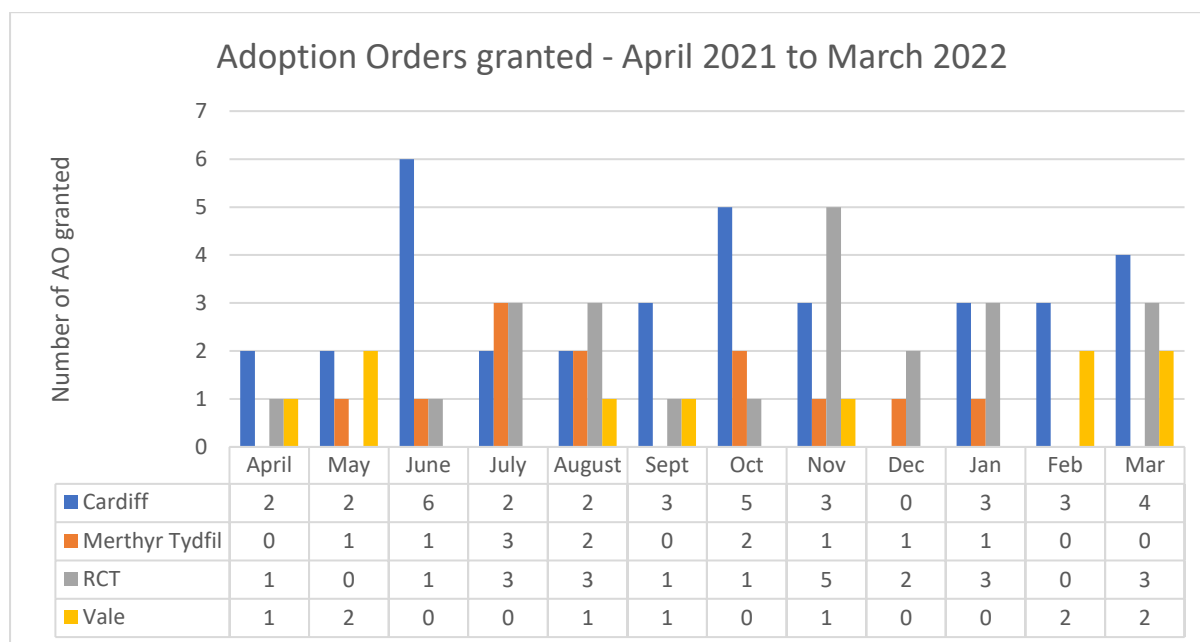
Children Placed

85 children were placed between in the reporting period.



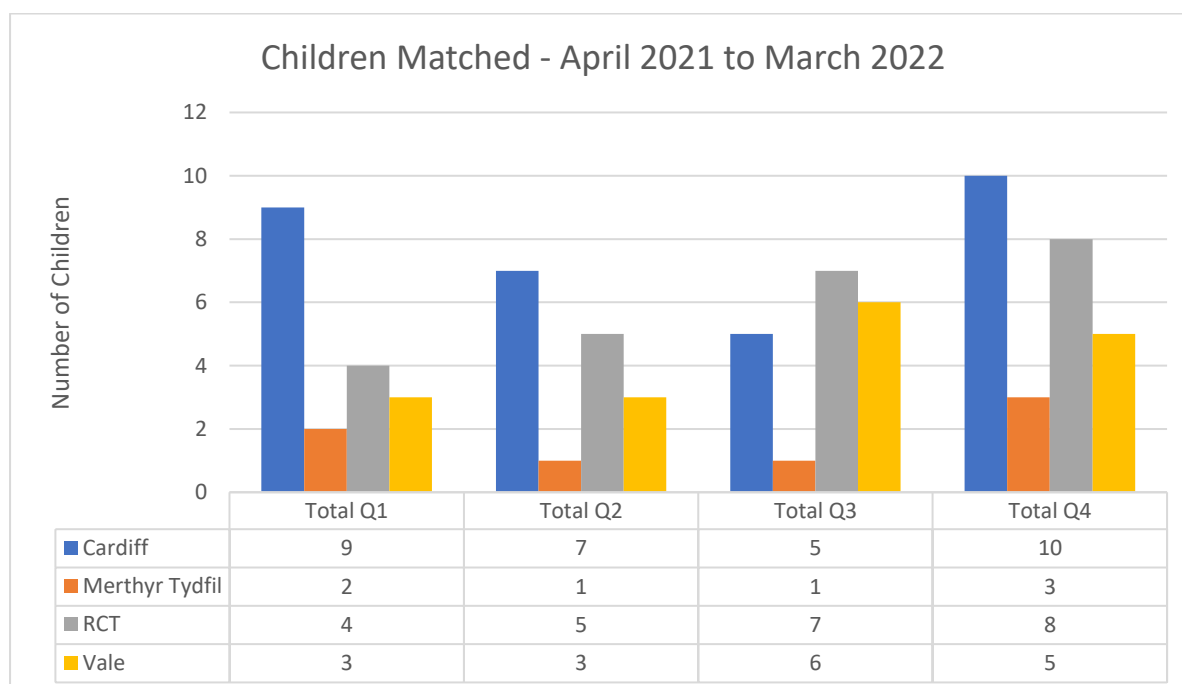
Adoption Orders

80 Adoption Orders were granted in the reporting period.



Children Matched

79 children were matched to adopters during the reporting period. This figure is consistent with comparative data for same period in previous year.



Number of children Matched since April 2020 who have waited longer than 6 months (or 3 months for a relinquished child under 6 months of age) to progress from “Should be placed for Adoption” decision to approve to Match

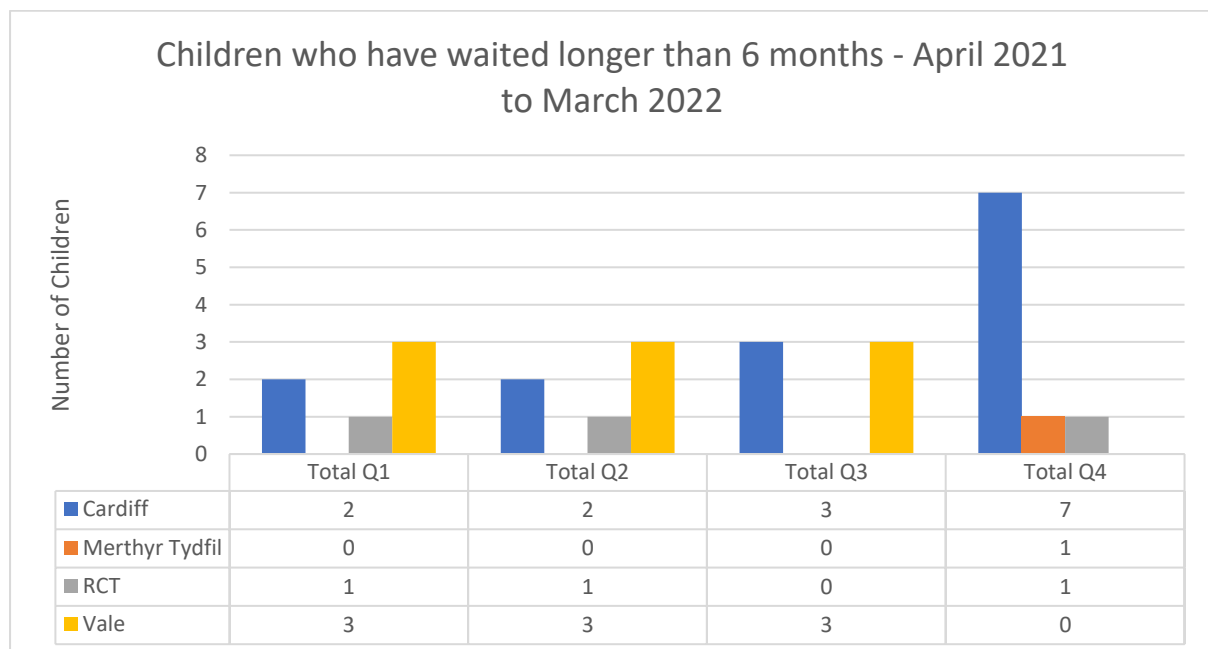
27 children matched in the reporting year have waited longer than six months to progress.

Of the **6** children matched in Quarter 1 who waited longer than six months to progress, two children were siblings, one child was 7 years old, 2 children were delayed as a result of foster care assessment and 1 child was delayed as a result of new medical information.

Of the **6** children matched in Quarter 2 who waited longer than six months to progress; 2 children were aged 4+, 2 children were BME, 2 children were a sibling group, and for 3 children, no suitable link was available.

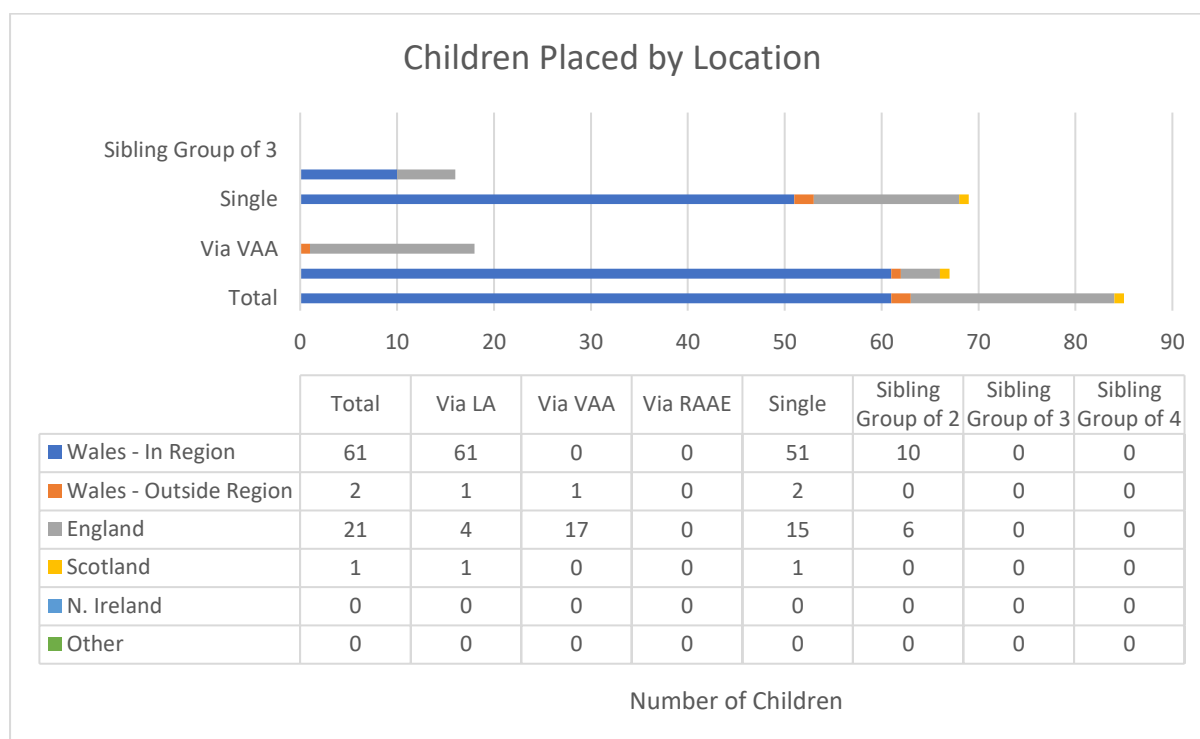
Of the **6** children matched in Quarter 3; 2 children were a sibling match and aged 4+, 1 child was 4+, and 3 children were delayed as a result of foster care assessment.

Of the **9** children matched in Quarter 4, two children were siblings, three children were aged 4+, one child was BME and three children were delayed as a result of foster care assessment and/or complex needs.



Type of placement

72% of children have been placed with VVC adopters, **25%** of children were placed in England and the remaining **3%** were placed within Wales but outside of the region and Scotland.

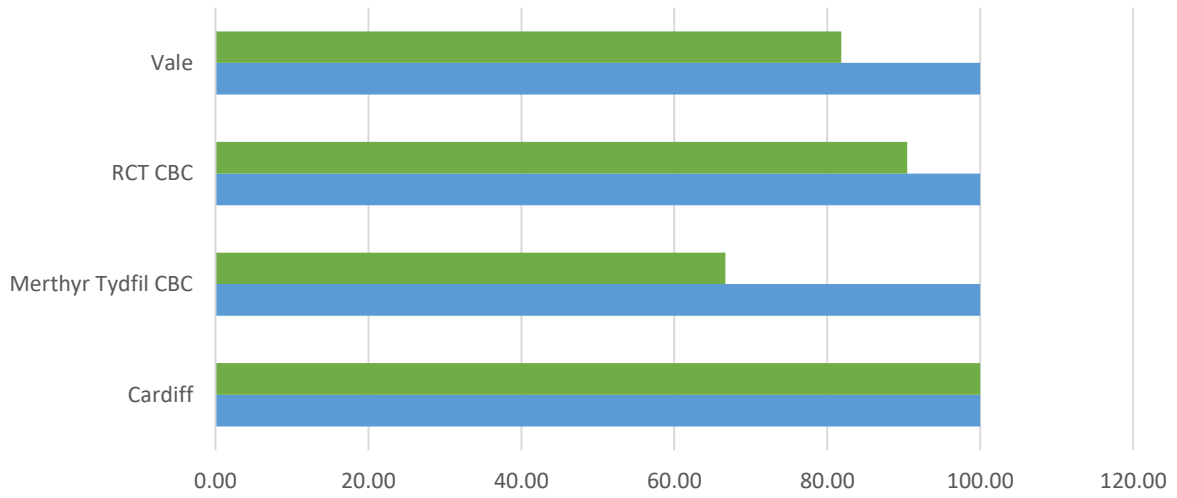


Life Journey Work

In the reporting period, 100% of life journey material in draft format is made available at the time of panel. An improvement is observed in life journey material available at the point of 2nd Review when compared to previous year. It should also be noted that in instances where life journey material has not been available at the point of 2nd review, further investigation has revealed either the review was bought forward, or adopters have been difficult to engage and have needed prompting to approve the final draft of the life journey book.

M20, M20A and M21 - Life Journey Work – April 2021 to March 2022						
	Matches	LJ Materials	2nd Review	LJ Materials	Panel %	2nd Review %
Cardiff	31	31	34	34	100.00	100.00
Merthyr Tydfil CBC	7	7	9	6	100.00	66.67
RCT CBC	24	24	21	19	100.00	90.48
Vale	17	17	11	9	100.00	81.82
Total	79	79	75	68	100.00	90.67

Life Journey Materials available at Panel and 2nd Review - April 2021 to March 2022

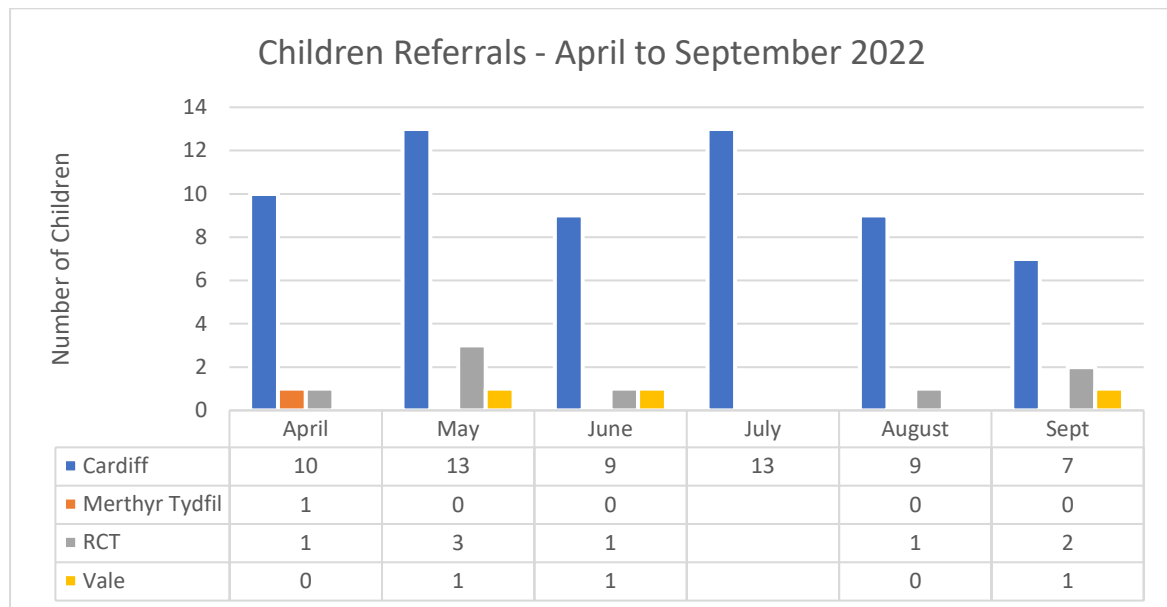


	Cardiff	Merthyr Tydfil CBC	RCT CBC	Vale
2nd Review %	100.00	66.67	90.48	81.82
Panel %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Family Finding – April to September 2022

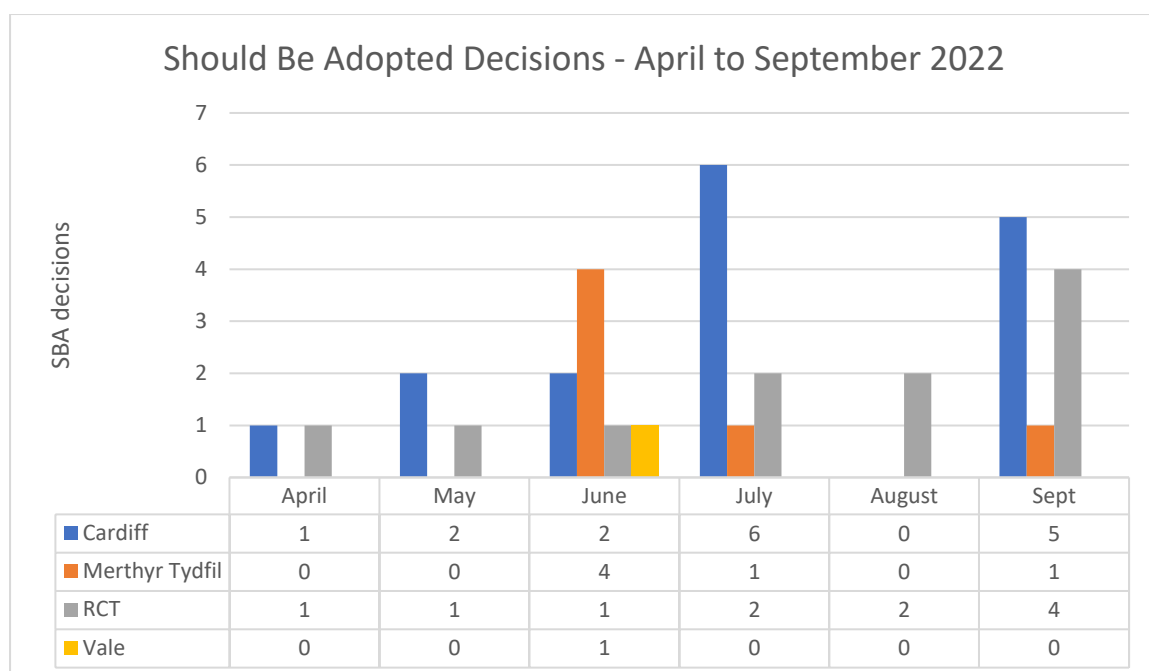
Referrals

73 referrals have been received during the reporting period.



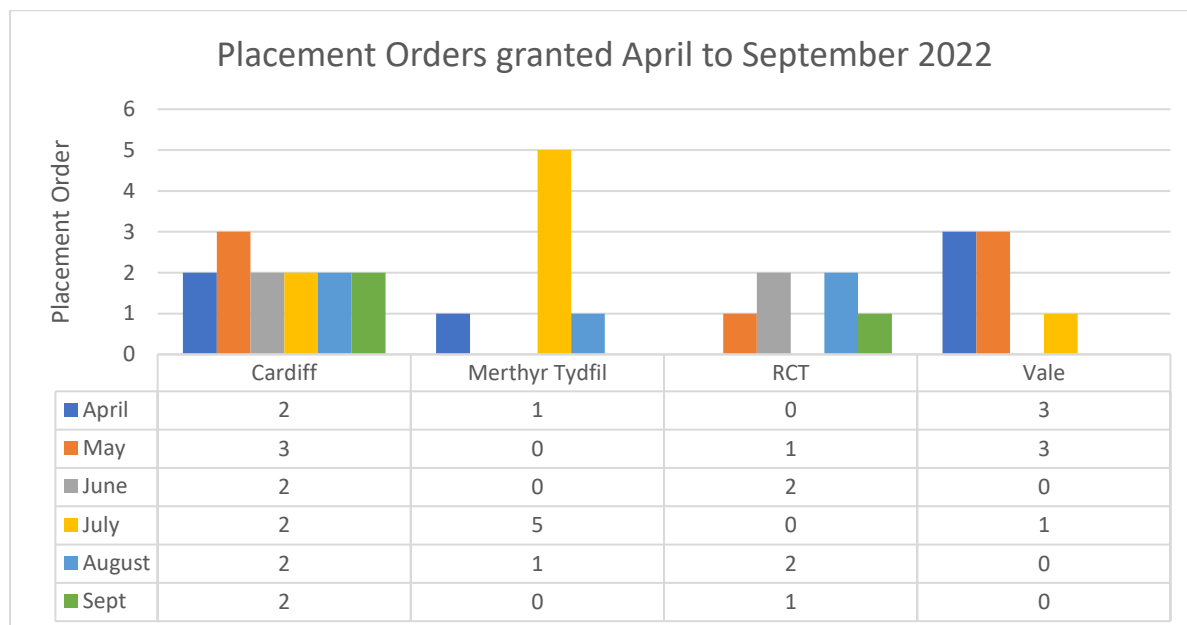
Should be Adopted Decisions

34 SBA decisions were made during the first half year.



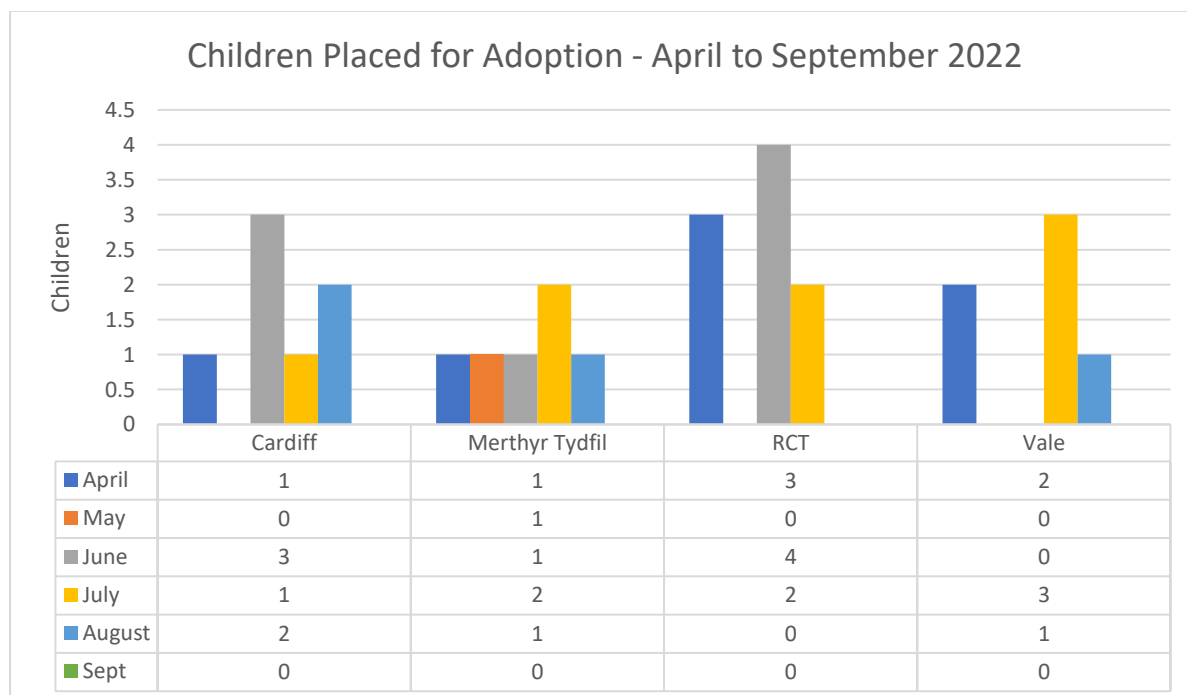
Placement Orders

33 Placement Orders were granted during the reporting period.



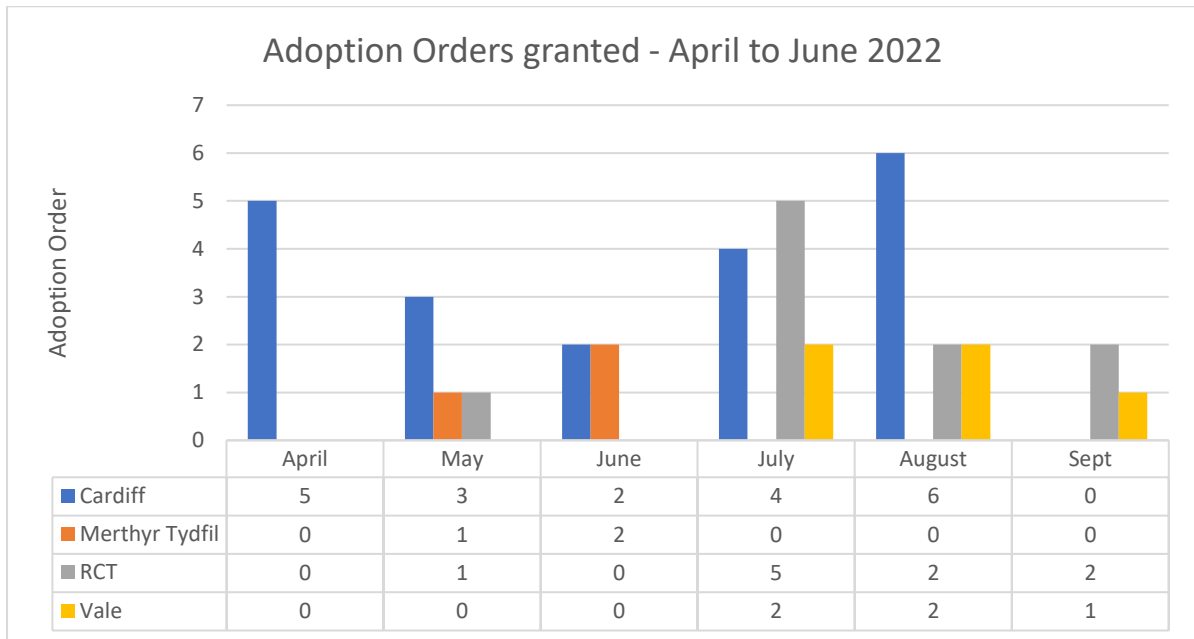
Children Placed

28 children were placed with their adoptive families during the reporting period.



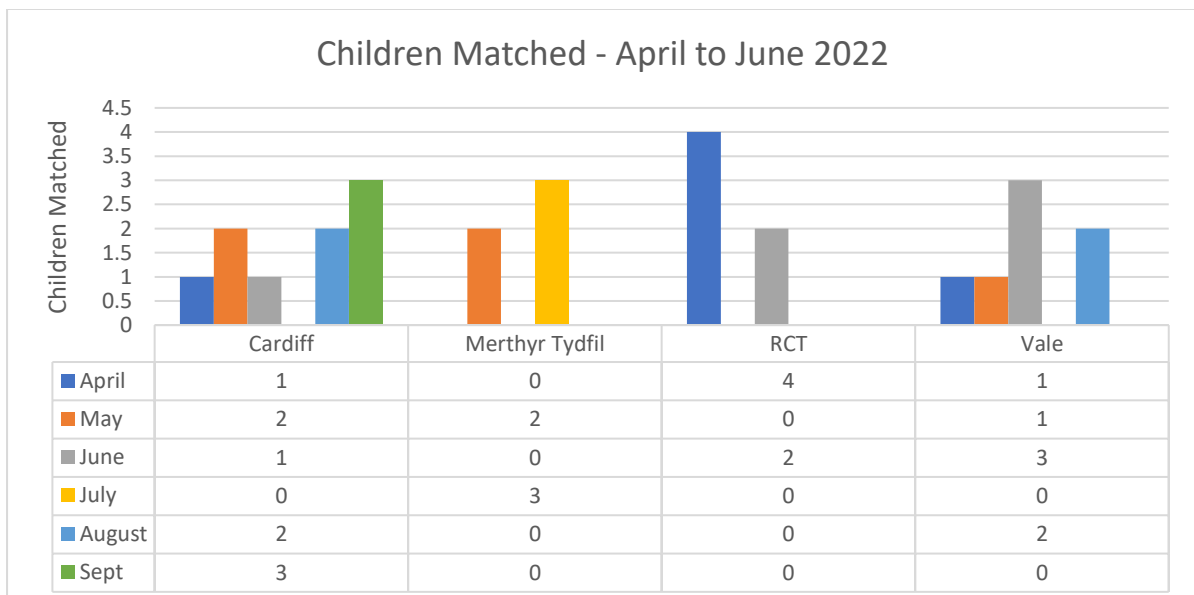
Adoption Orders

38 Adoption Orders were granted.



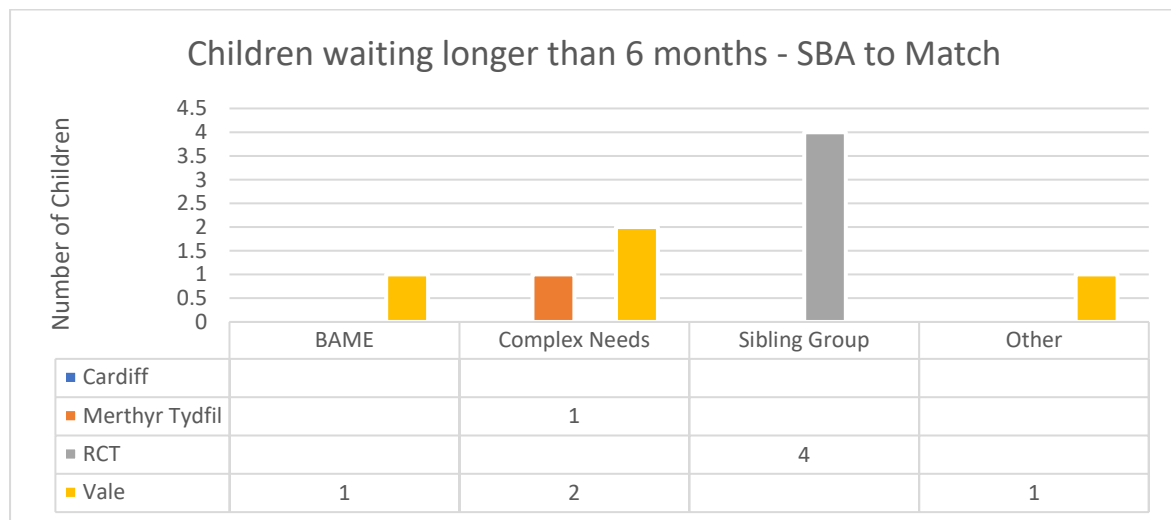
Children matched

27 children were matched during the period April to September 2022.



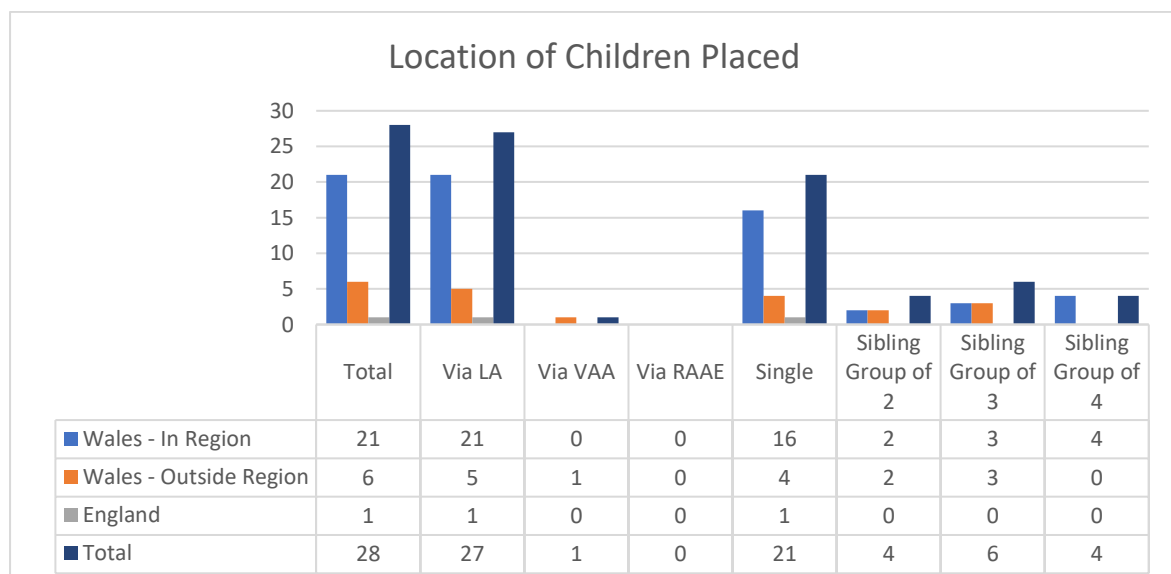
Number of children Matched since April 2021 who have waited longer than 6 months (or 3 months for a relinquished child under 6 months of age) to progress from "Should be placed for Adoption" decision to approve to Match

8 children waited longer than six months to progress from SBA to matched. Four children were part of a sibling group, three children have complex needs and one BAME child's prospective adopter withdrew at the point of introductions, so family finding has restarted.



Type of placement

75% of children were placed with VVC adopters. 21% of children were placed in Wales and 4% of children were placed in England.

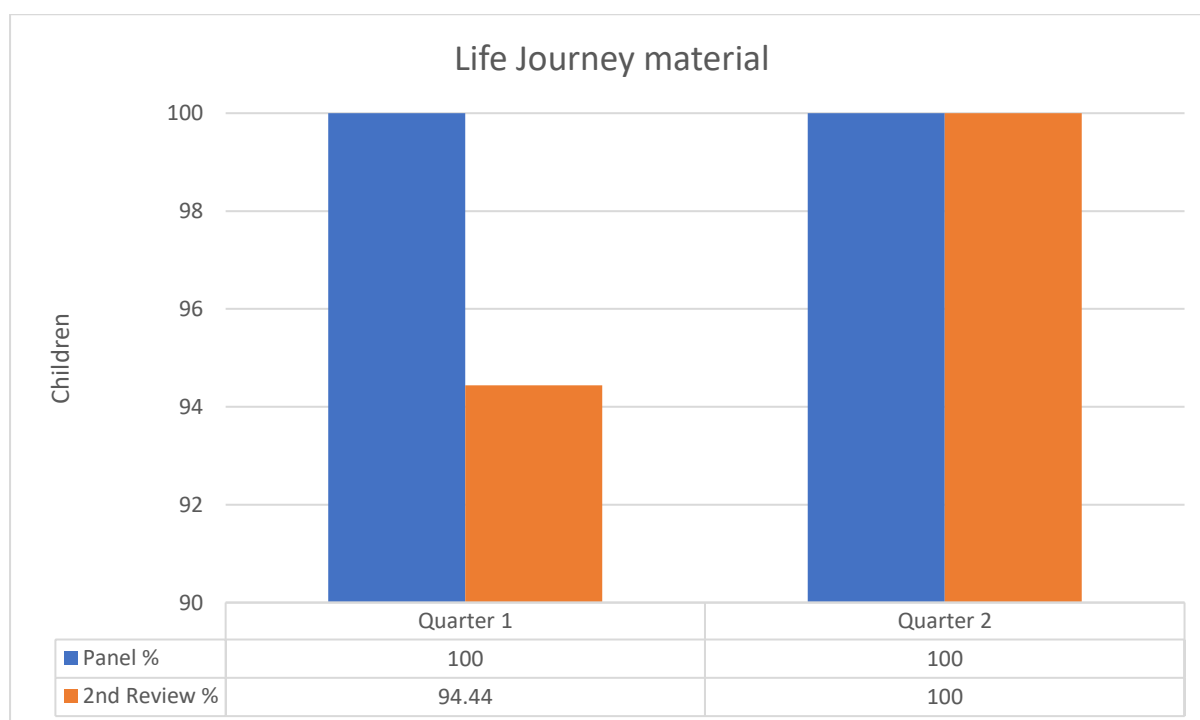


Life Journey

In the reporting period, **100%** of life journey material in draft format is made available at the time of panel. An improvement is observed in life journey material available at the point of 2nd Review when compared to previous year.

M20, M20A and M21 - Life Journey - Accumulated Data						
	Matches	LJ Materials	2nd Review	LJ Materials	Panel %	2nd Review %
Quarter 1	17	17	18	17	100	94.44
Quarter 2	10	10	10	10	100	100.00
Total	27	27	28	27	100	96.43

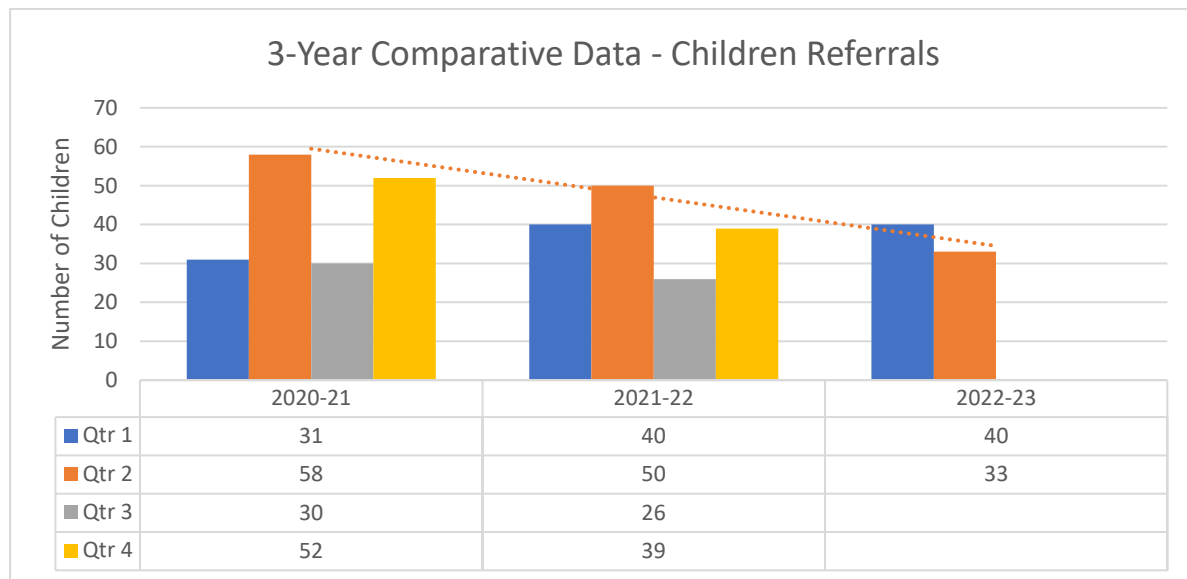
In Quarter 1, Merthyr Tydfil reported the delay in providing later life journey material at the point of 2nd Review because adopters were difficult to engage and needed prompting to approve the final draft of the life journey book.



Comparative Data April 2020 to September 2023

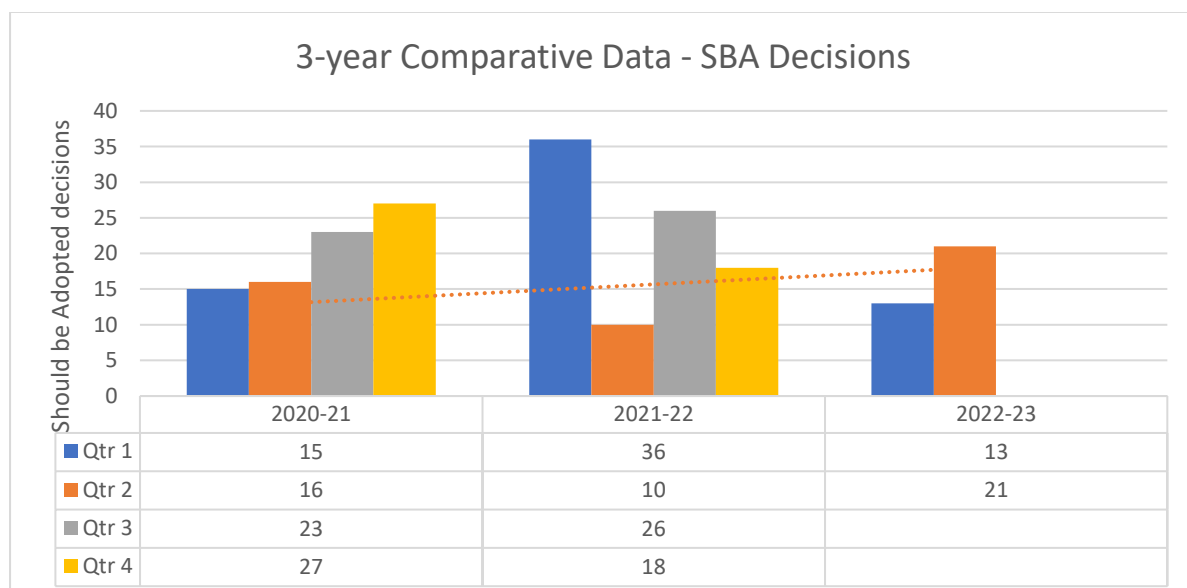
Referrals

Over the past three years, referrals to the service have remained stable. Nationally, for the same comparative period, other regions have reported a decrease in the number of referrals. When comparing referrals at the mid-year point of the year (April to September), an **18%** decrease is noted and is less than other regions. This trend will need to be monitored for the rest of the year to establish whether this is consistent with national trends.



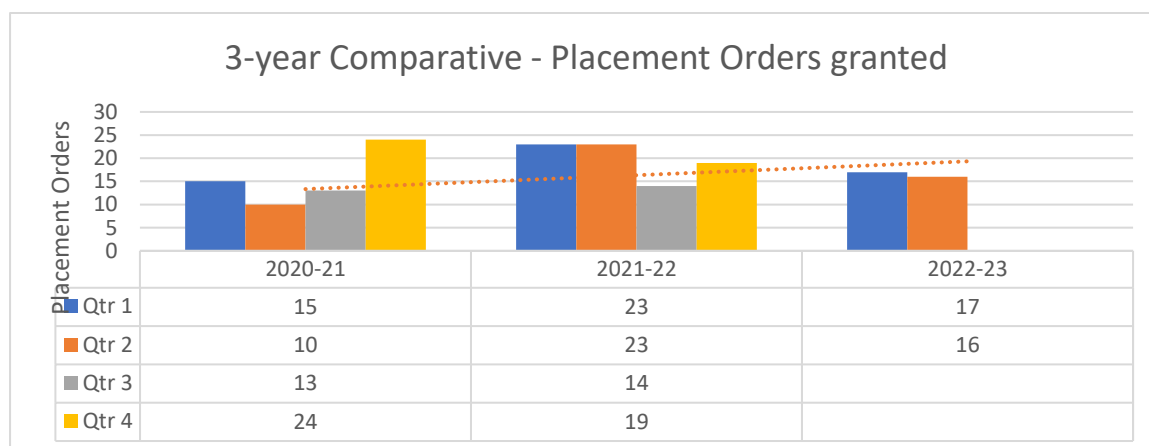
Should be Adopted

Should be Adopted decisions over the three-year period remain stable. When comparing data at mid-year point, a **9%** increase is observed when compared to 2020-21 and a **26%** decrease is observed when compared to 2021-22.



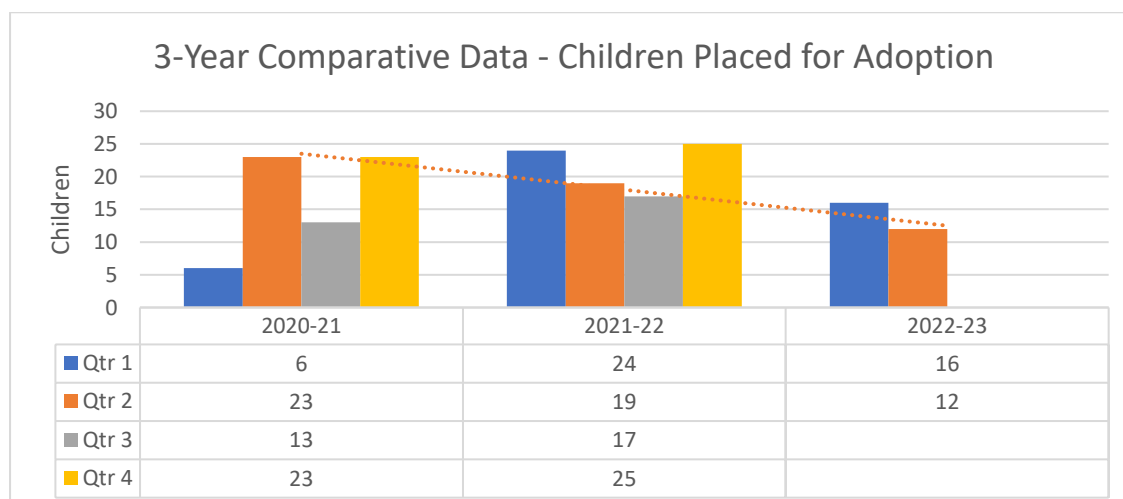
Placement Orders

VVC observed a slight decline in placement orders in around 2019/2020 but not as significantly as being felt across Wales at present. Our rates of Placement Orders within VVC remain consistent albeit with a larger cohort of these from Cardiff rather than the other local authorities. Cardiff's referral rates remain steady into the adoption service at present. The Vale of Glamorgan noted a decline in care proceedings over the past year although report that recently these have been increasing again. Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil both report a change in the way they are working under PLO/pre-birth and that this has been having an impact. Merthyr advise that they have seen a decrease in the rate of children becoming looked after linked to a number of service developments. RCT note the work being undertaken in assessment pre-proceedings including parent and child placements but are mindful that these are situations which inevitably involve risk management and there could be an increase in referrals to adoption if alternative care arrangements are not sustainable.



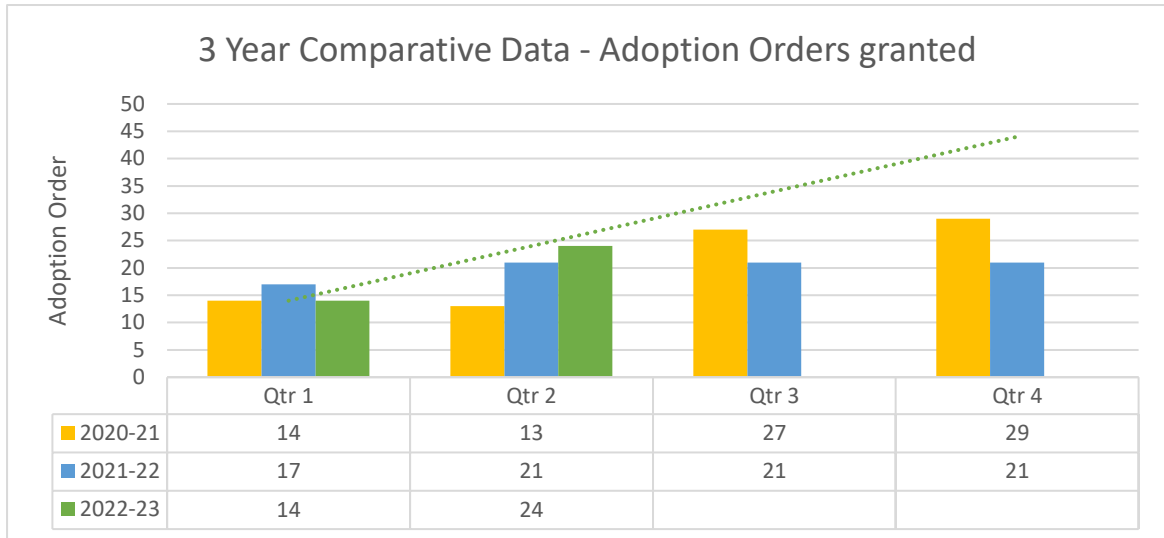
Children placed

A noted decrease (34%) is noted when compared to the same period in previous year. This is consistent with the decrease in the number of children waiting.



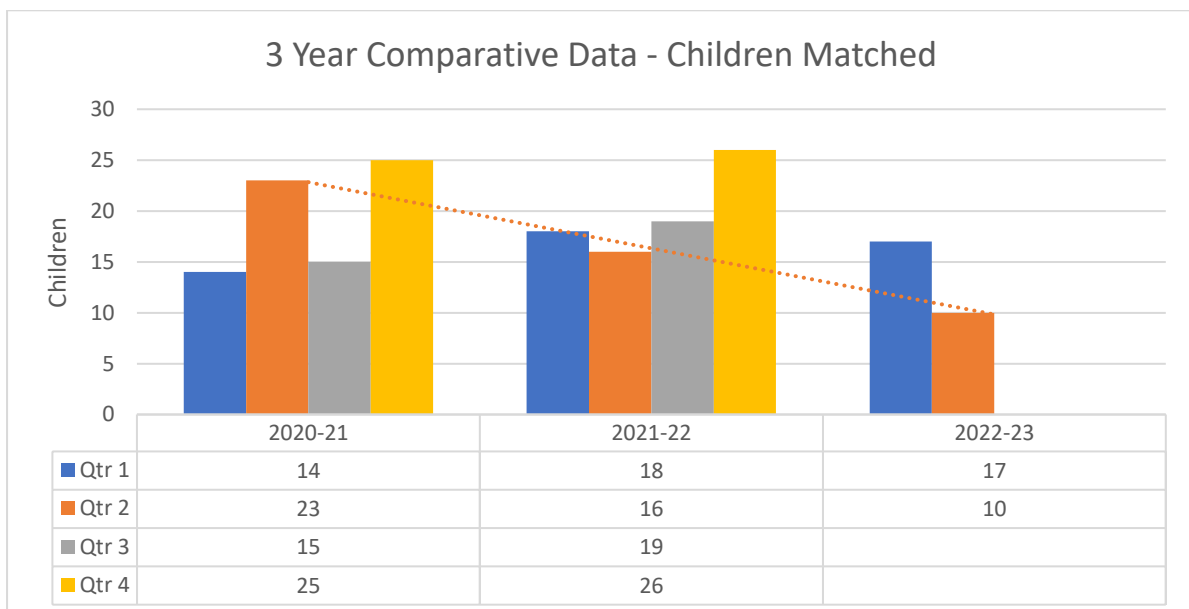
Adoption Orders

An increase in the number of Adoption Orders granted is observed when compared to previous years.



Children matched

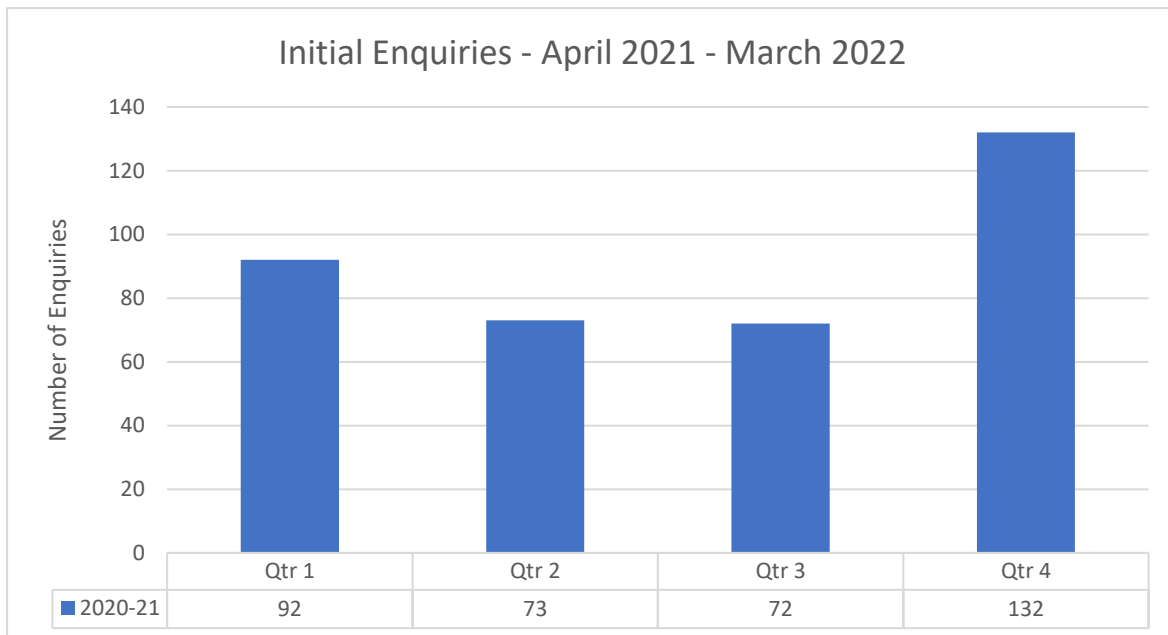
A downward trend is noted in the number of children matched, which is consistent when considering the number of children waiting.



Appendix 2 – Recruitment & Assessment

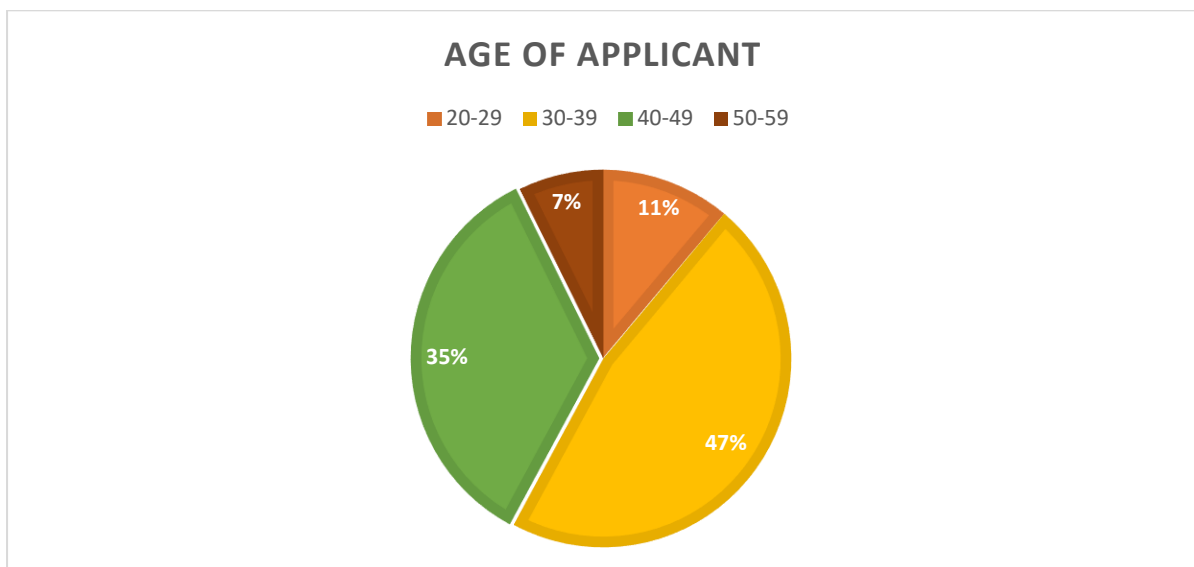
Initial Enquiries

369 initial enquiries were received during the reporting period. 100% of enquiries received a response by phone, e-mail, or letter within 5 working days. Comparative data continues to demonstrate an upward trend in the number of initial enquiries received. **48%** (178 initial enquiries) did not progress after requesting further information.



Age

Of the 369 initial enquiries, **47%** of applicants were aged between 30-39 years of age, **35%** were aged between 40-49 years of age.



Ethnicity

94% of all applicants identify as WHITE. **6%** of applicants identify as BBAC, ASAB or MIXD.

Definitions are taken from Children looked after census 2021-22, Office for Statistics, Welsh Government as follows:

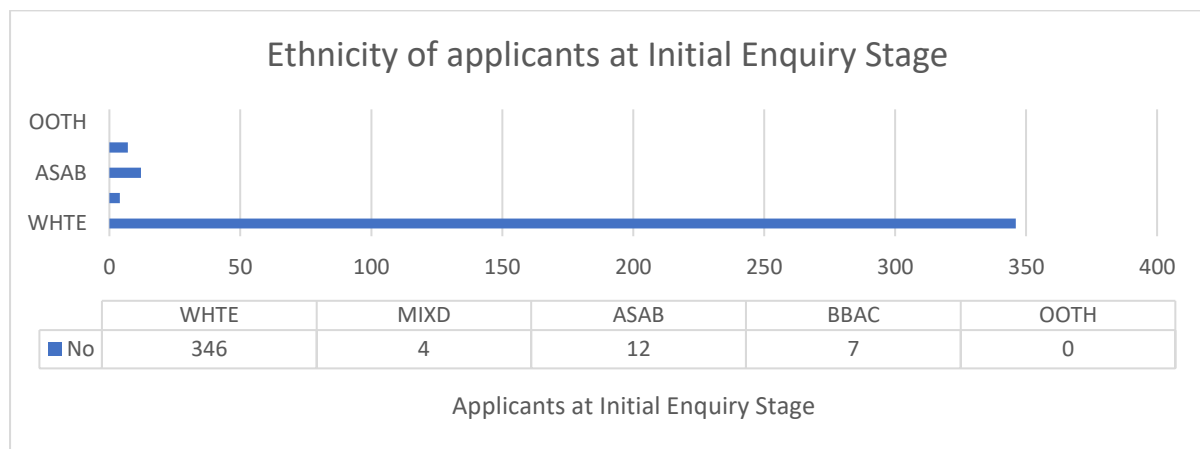
WHITE - White

MIXD - Mixed ethnic groups

ASAB – Asian or Asian British

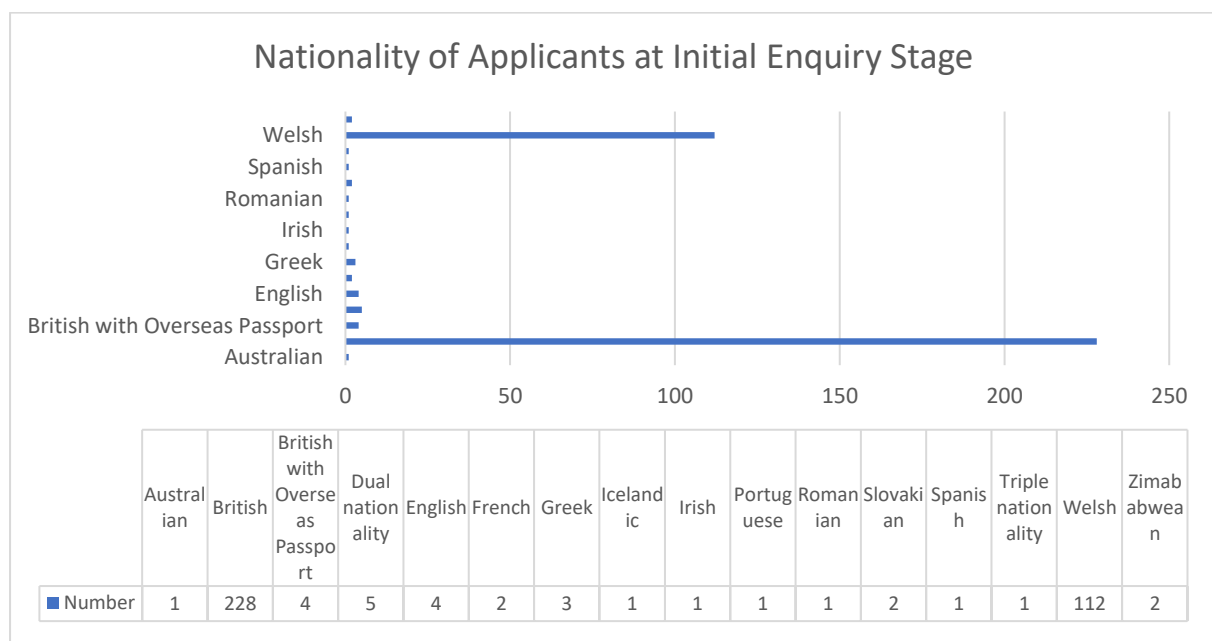
BBAC – Black, African, Caribbean or Black British

OOOTH - Other ethnic group



Nationality

62% of applicants disclose they are British. **30%** of applicants disclose they are Welsh.



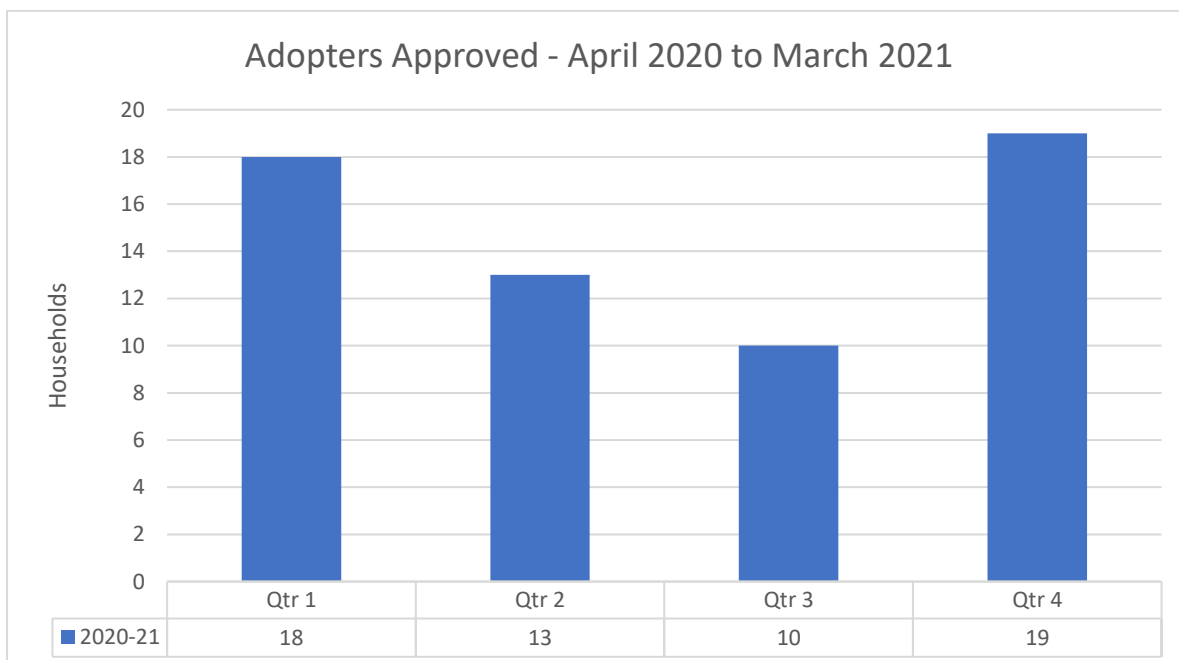
Initial Visits

93 initial visits took place during the reporting period. When compared to previous years, the number of initial visits is consistent with previous years.



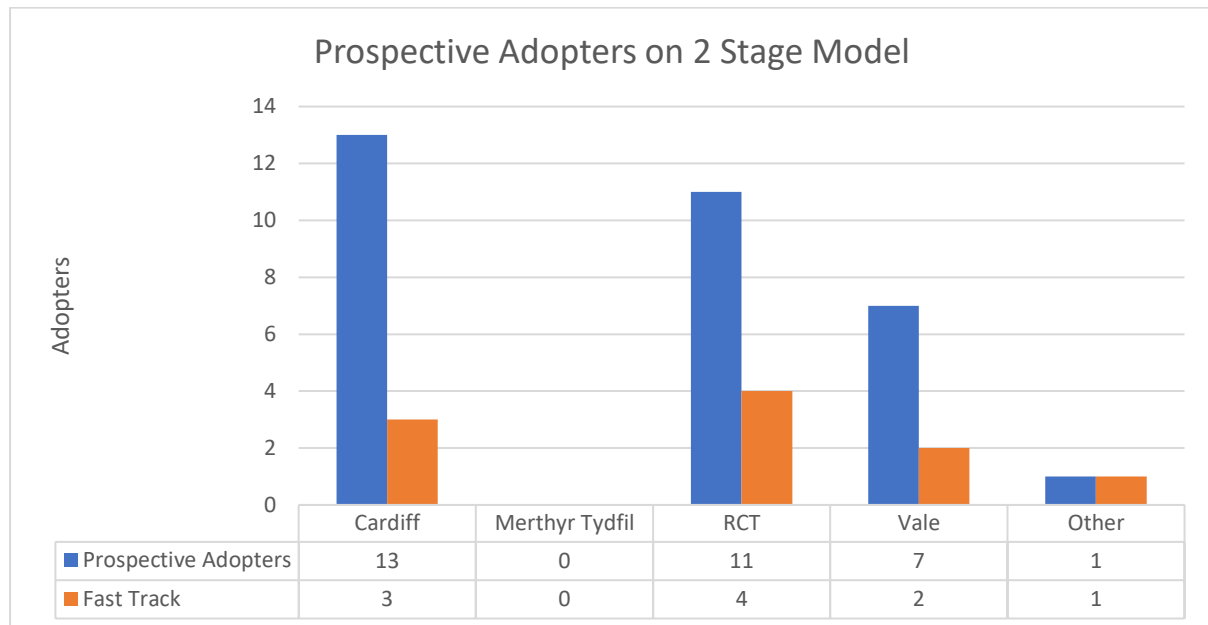
Adopter Approvals

59 adoptive households have been approved to adopt during the reporting period. **60** adoptive households were presented at panel, 1 of which was awaiting ratification at the end of Quarter 4.



2 Stage Model

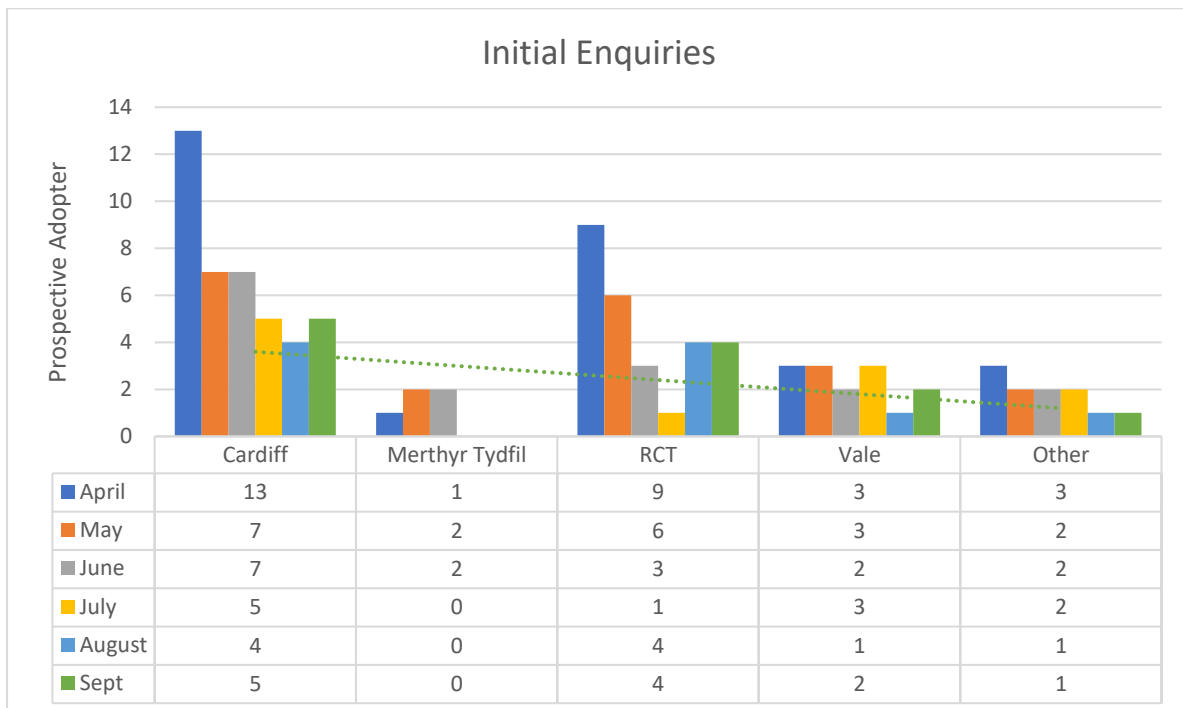
With effect from 1st October 2021, the 2-Stage model for Recruitment & Assessment of Adopters came into effect. **32** prospective adopters have started Stage 1 of the process. **31%** of prospective adopters are fast tracking as 2nd time adopters.



Recruitment & Assessment – April to September 2023

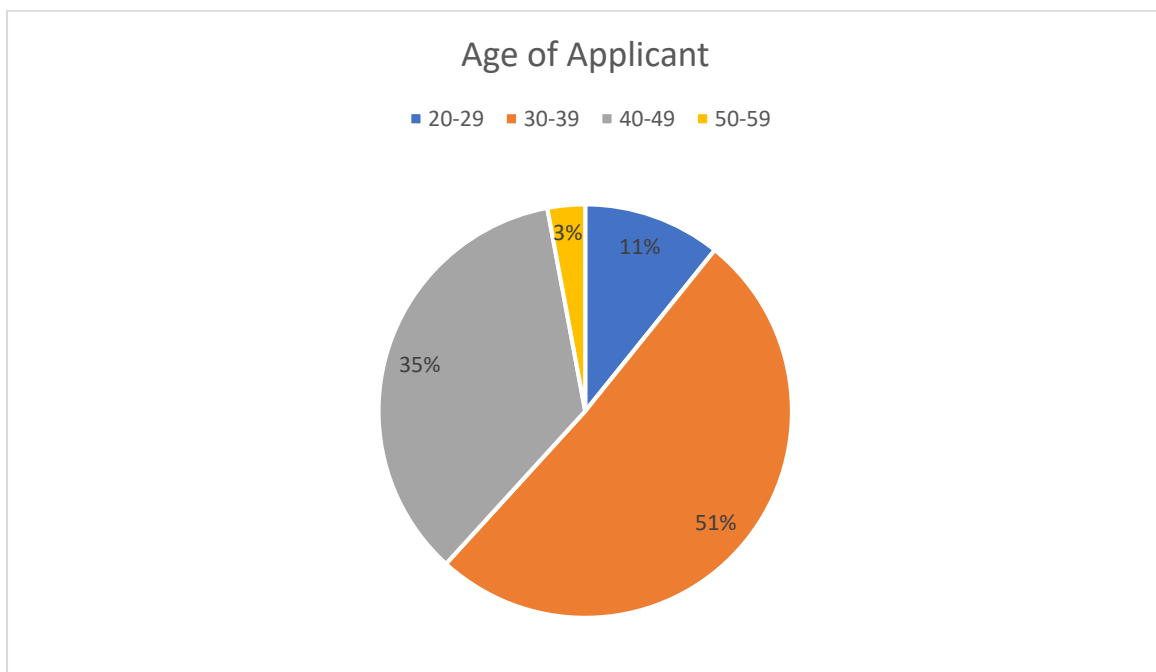
Initial Enquiries

98 enquiries over the six-month period.



Age

Of the 98 enquiries, **51%** are aged between 30-39 and **35%** are aged between 40-49.



Ethnicity

84% of all applicants identify as WHITE. **6%** of applicants identify as BBAC, ASAB or MIXD.

Definitions are taken from Children looked after census 2021-22, Office for Statistics, Welsh Government as follows:

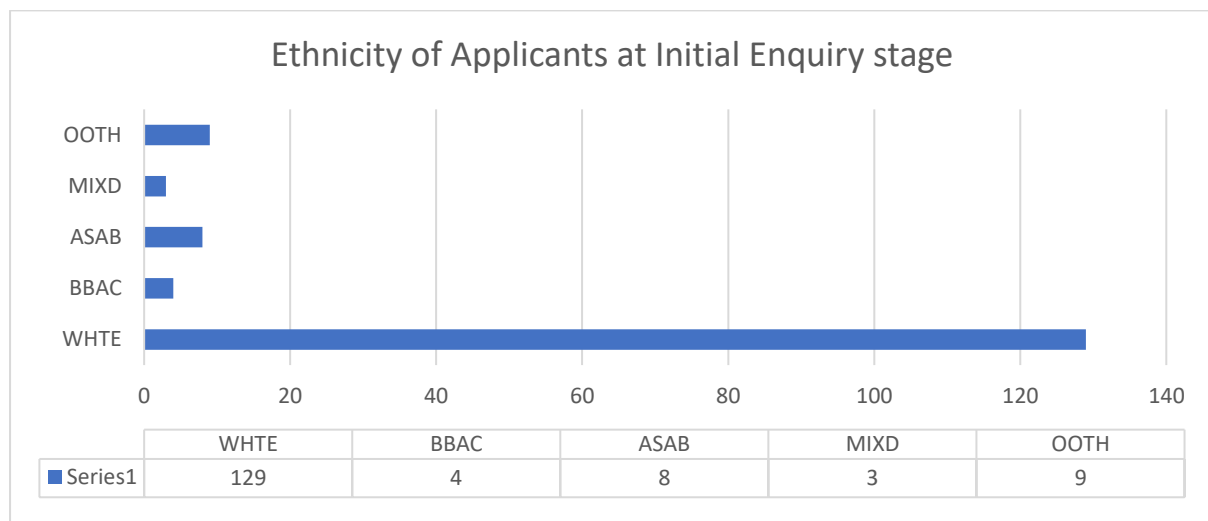
WHITE - White

MIXD - Mixed ethnic groups

ASAB – Asian or Asian British

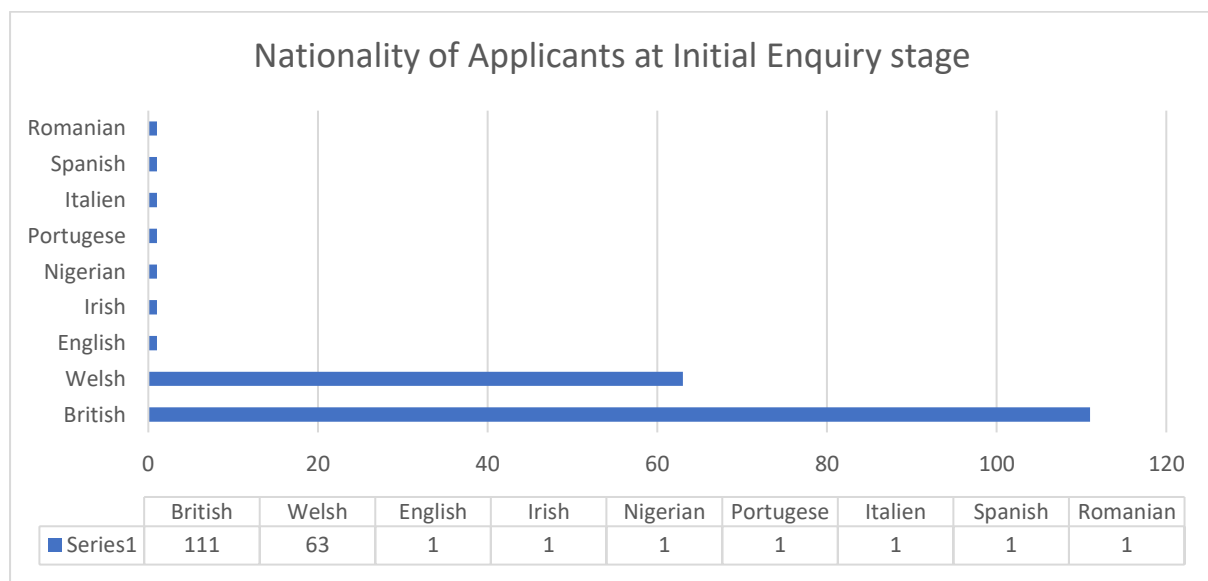
BBAC – Black, African, Caribbean or Black British

OOTH - Other ethnic group



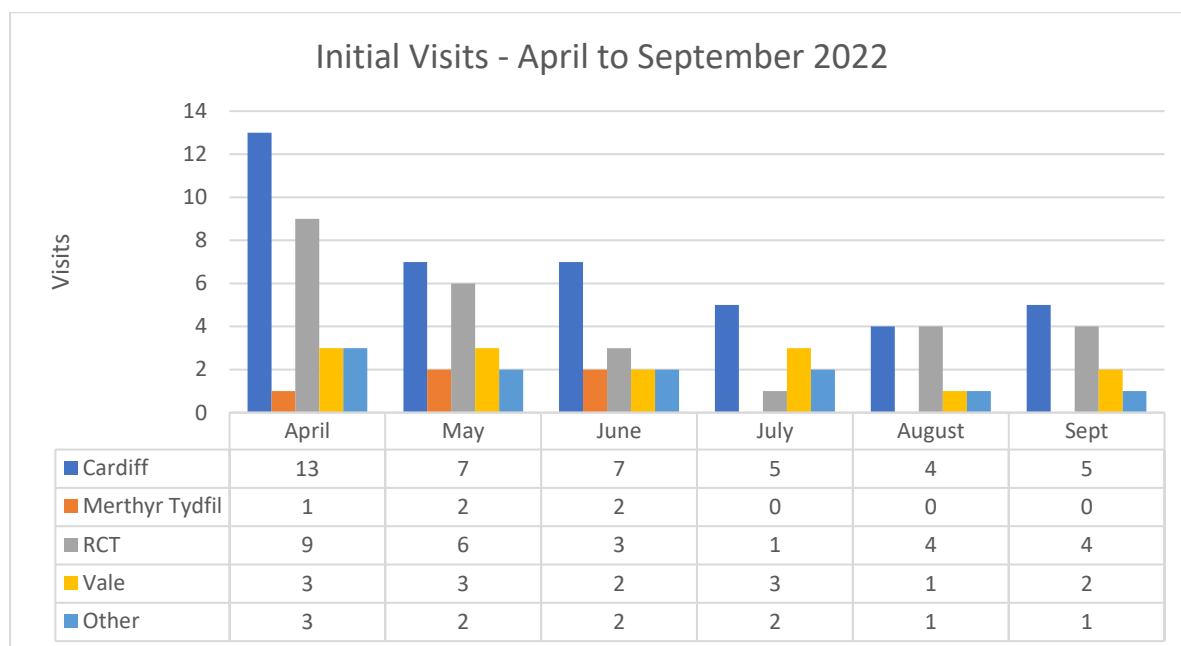
Nationality

61% of applicants disclose they are British, **35%** disclosed they are Welsh and **4%** disclosed other nationalities.



Initial Visits

26 initial visits were carried out during the reporting period.

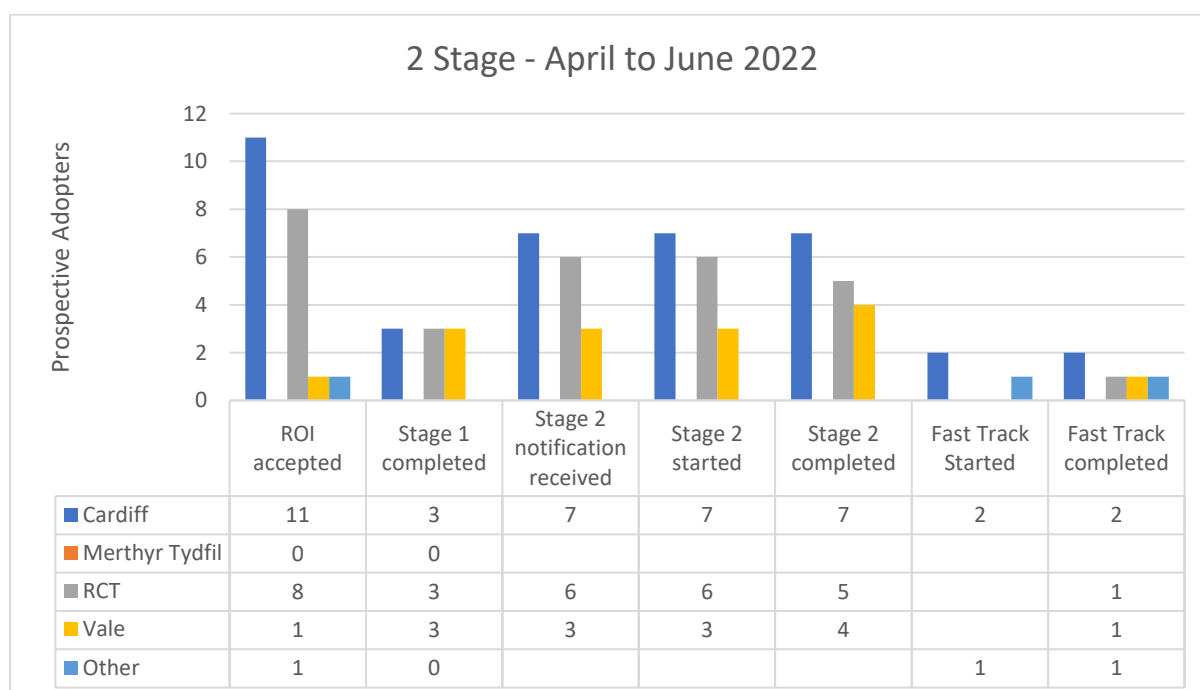


2 stage model

21 Registrations of Interest were received during the reporting period.

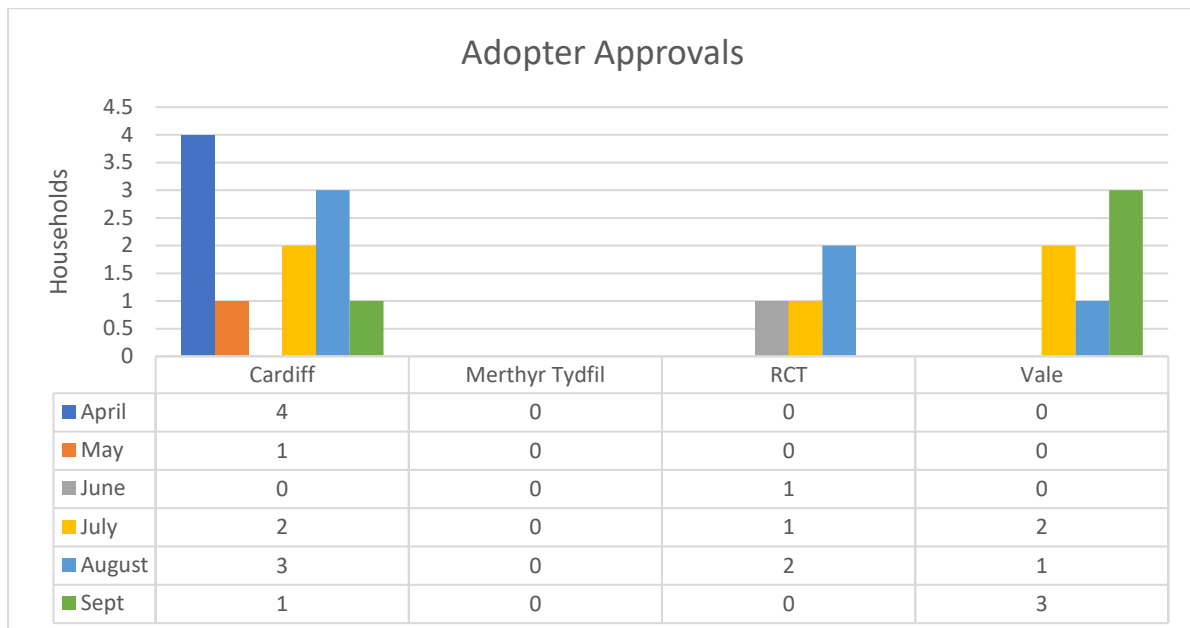
9 prospective adopters completed Stage 1 of the process and progressed to Stage 2.

3 prospective adopters fast-tracked their application, and **5** prospective adopters completed the fast-track process.



Adopter Approvals

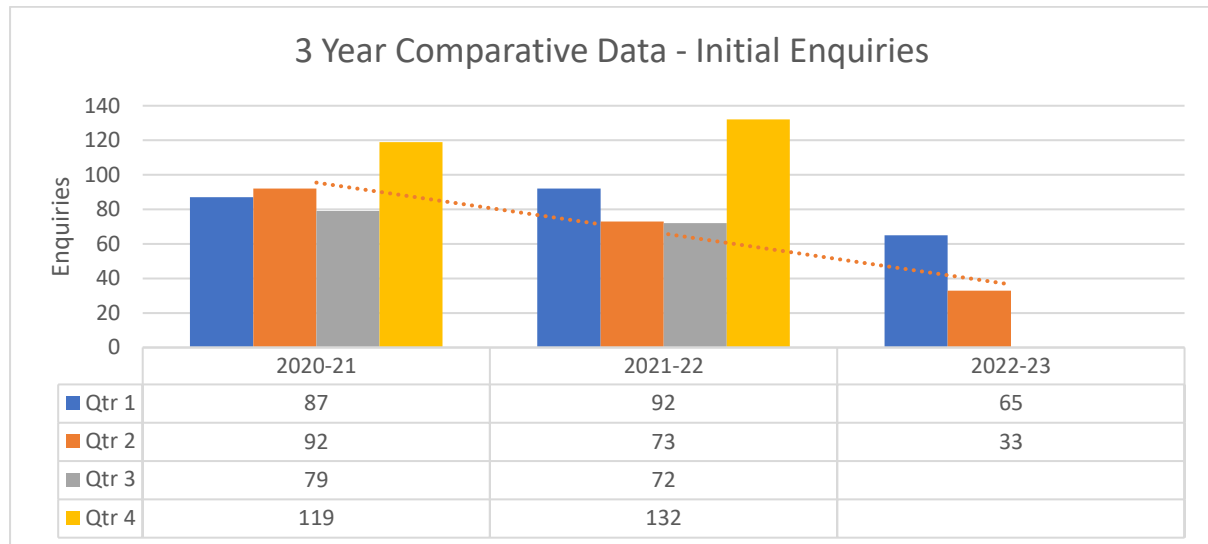
30 adopters have been approved during the reporting period.



Comparative Data April 2020 to September 2023

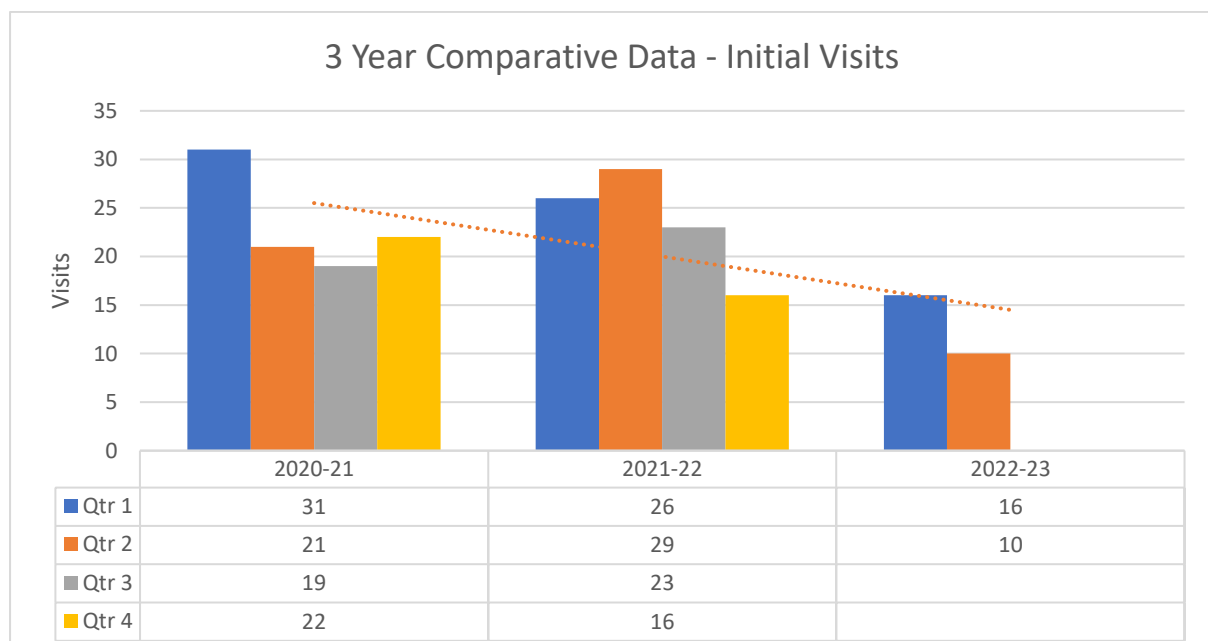
Initial Enquiries

A national trend has been observed over the past year in the number of enquiries for adoption. VVC however, are only just starting to see a reduction in the number of enquiries received.



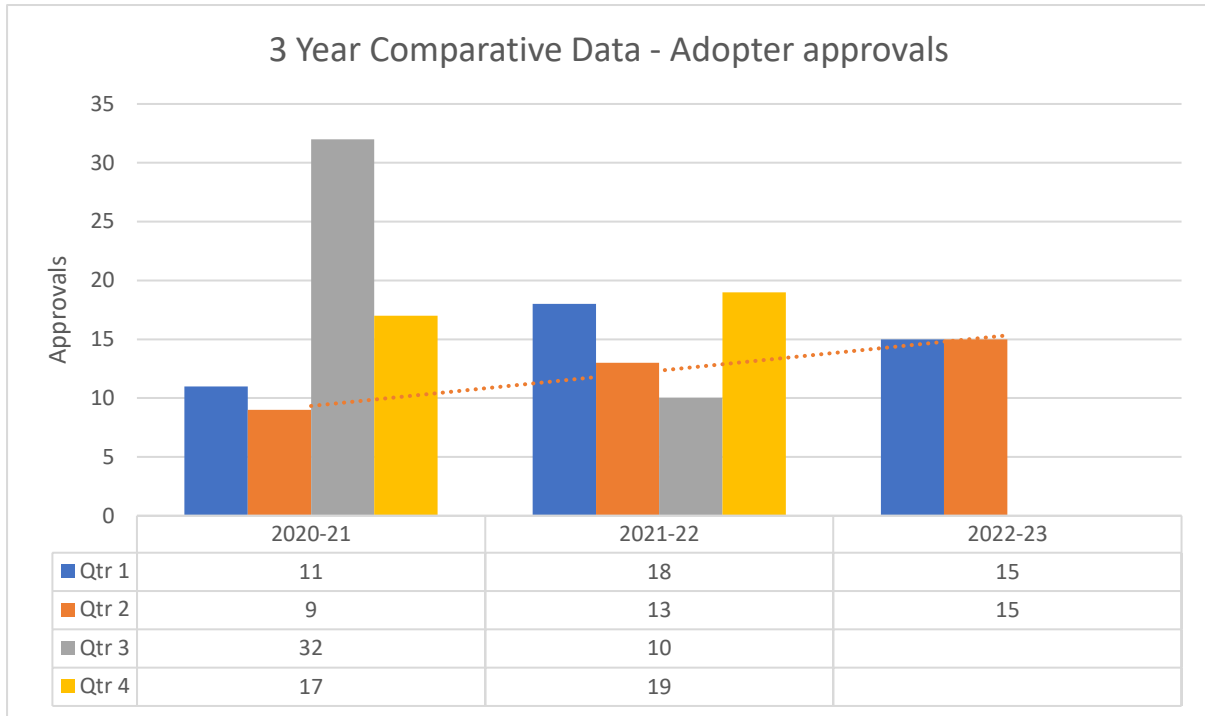
Initial Visits

Comparison of data held over the three years at the mid-year point indicate a year-on-year decrease (**50%**) in the number of initial visits being carried out. This is, however, consistent with the number of enquiries being received.



Approved Adopters

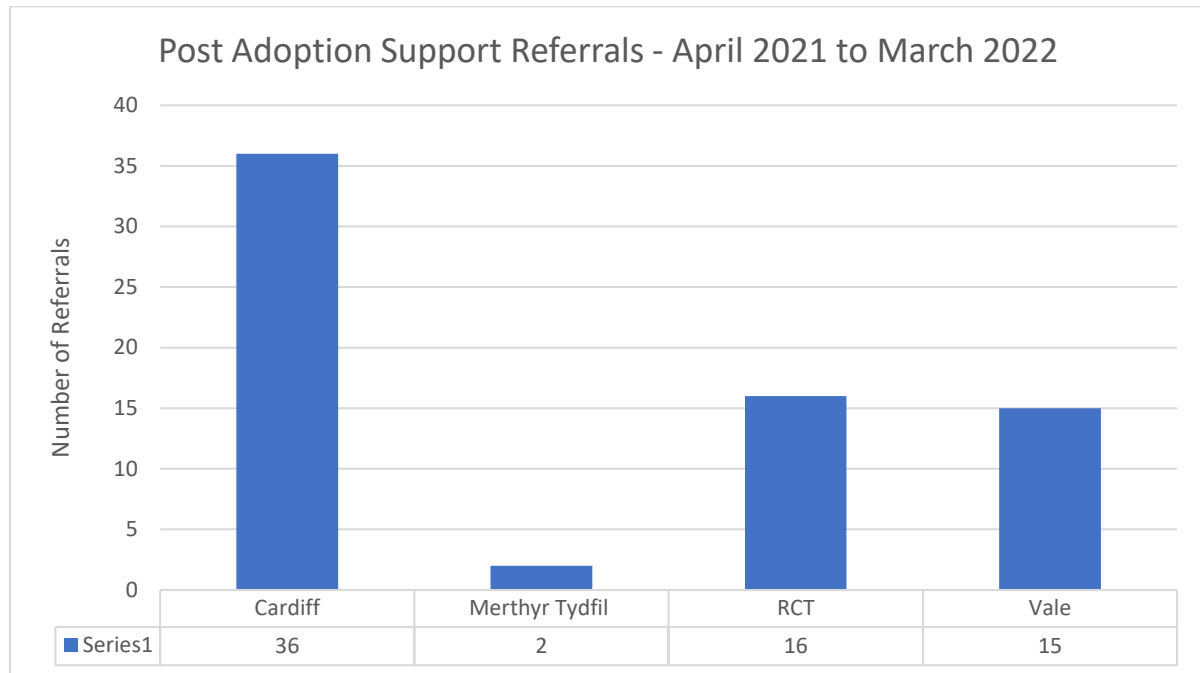
Adopter approvals for the first half of year remain stable when compared to 2021-22, with an increase in approval when compared to the same period in 2020-21.



Appendix 3 – Adoption Support

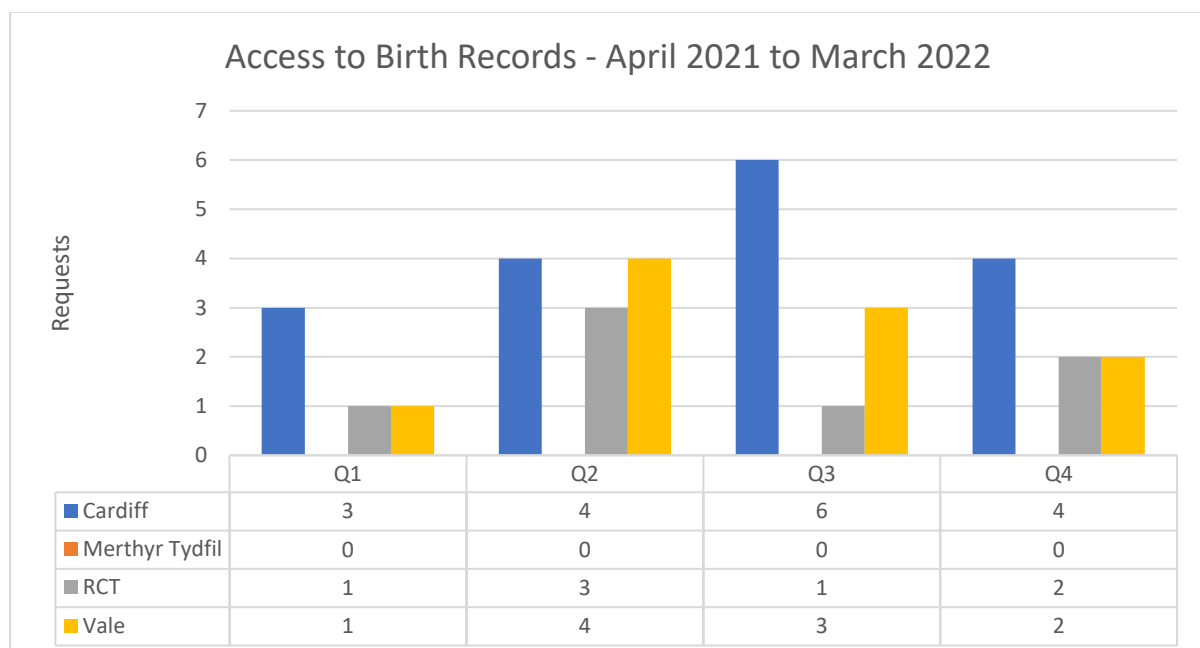
Referrals

69 Post Adoption Support referrals were received during the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022. **52%** were received from Cardiff, **24%** were received from RCT, **21%** were received from Vale of Glamorgan and **3%** were received from Merthyr Tydfil.

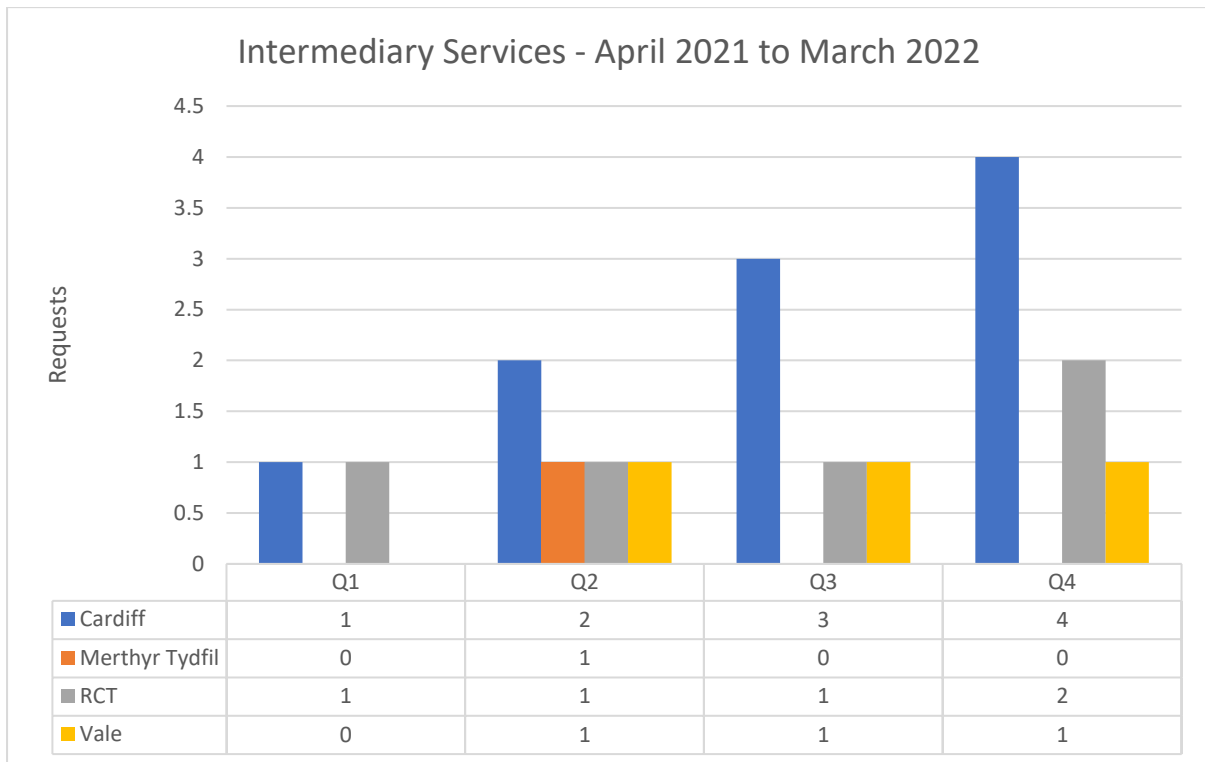


Access to Birth Records and Intermediary Services

34 referrals were received for Access to Birth Records.

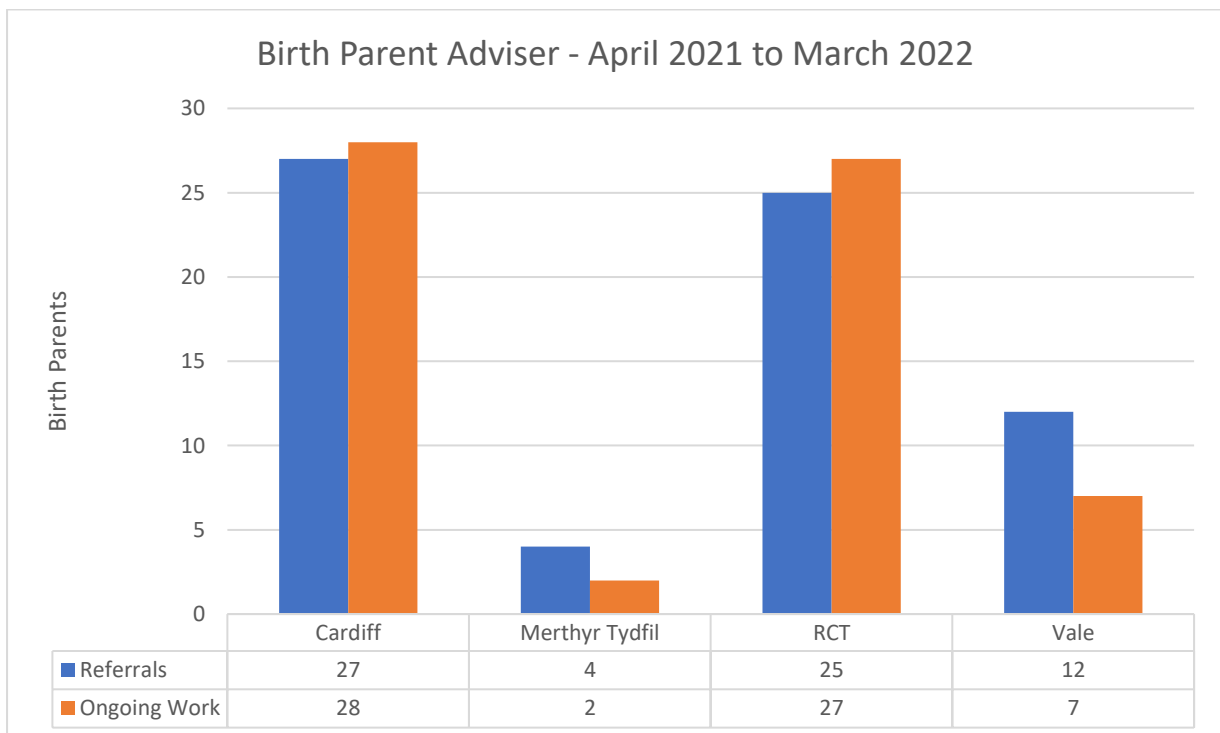


21 requests for Intermediary Services were received during the reporting period.



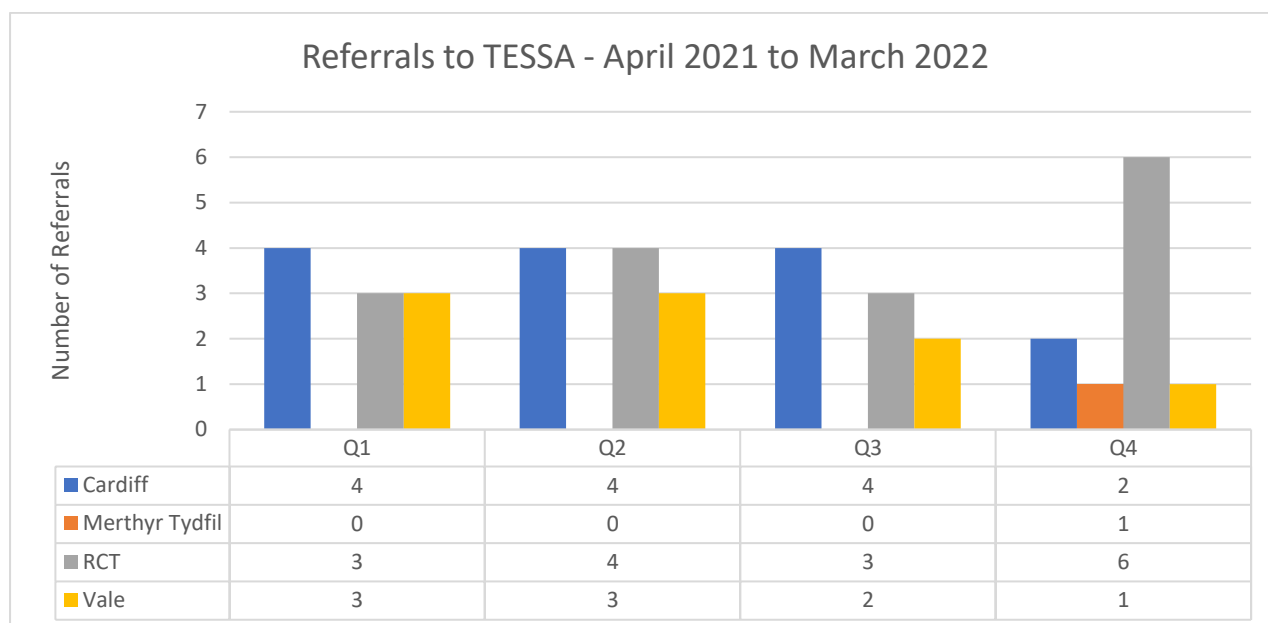
Birth Parent Adviser

68 referrals were made during the reporting period April 2021 to March 2022. **64** birth parents continue to receive ongoing support from previous referrals.



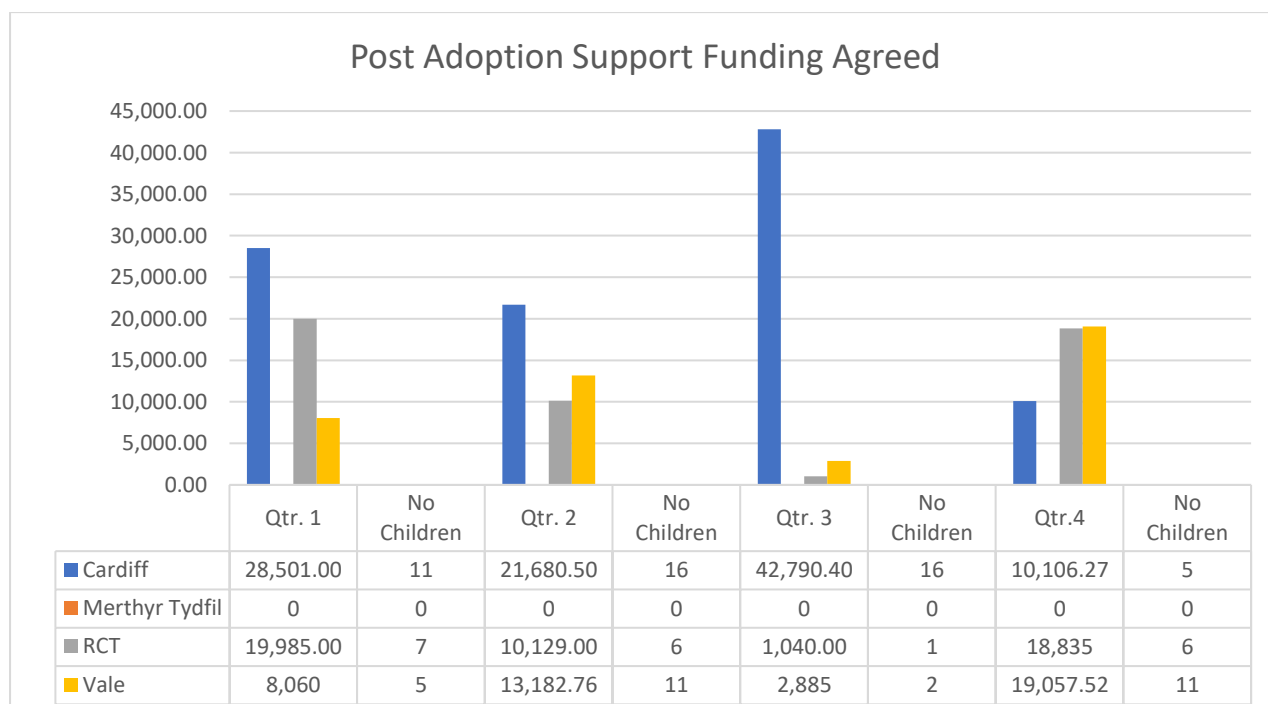
TESSA

40 Referrals were received for TESSA during the reporting period (April 2021 to March 2022).



Financial Expenditure

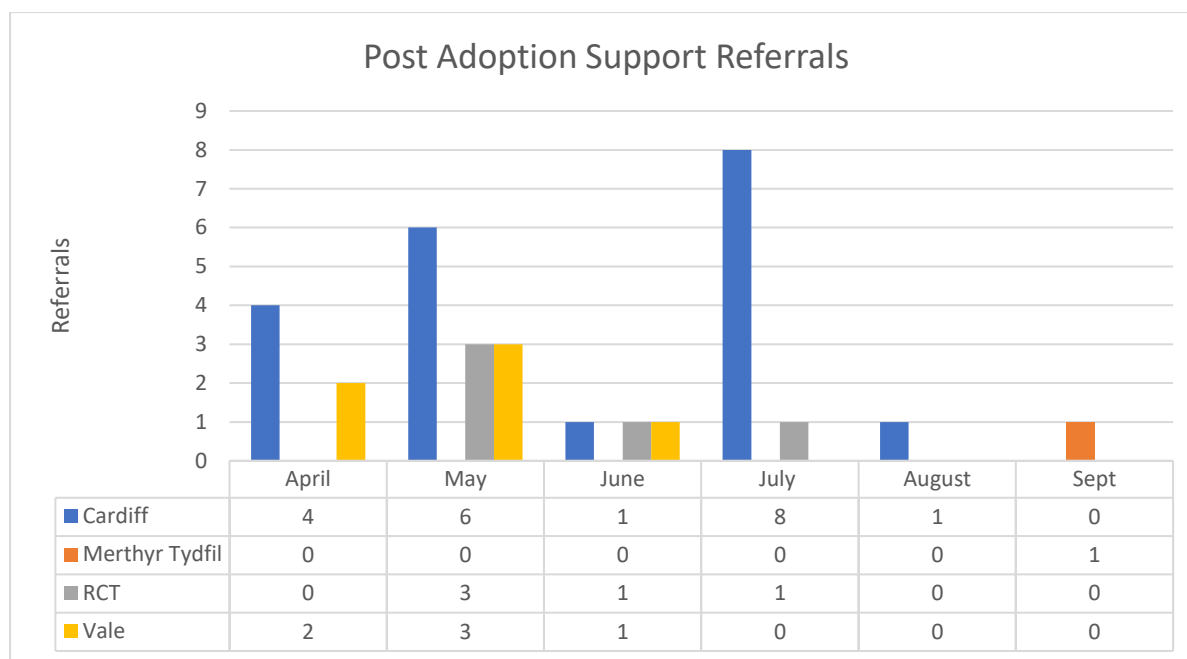
During the reporting period April 2021 to March 2022, 97 children were approved to receive funded therapeutic support packages.



Adoption Support – April to September 2022

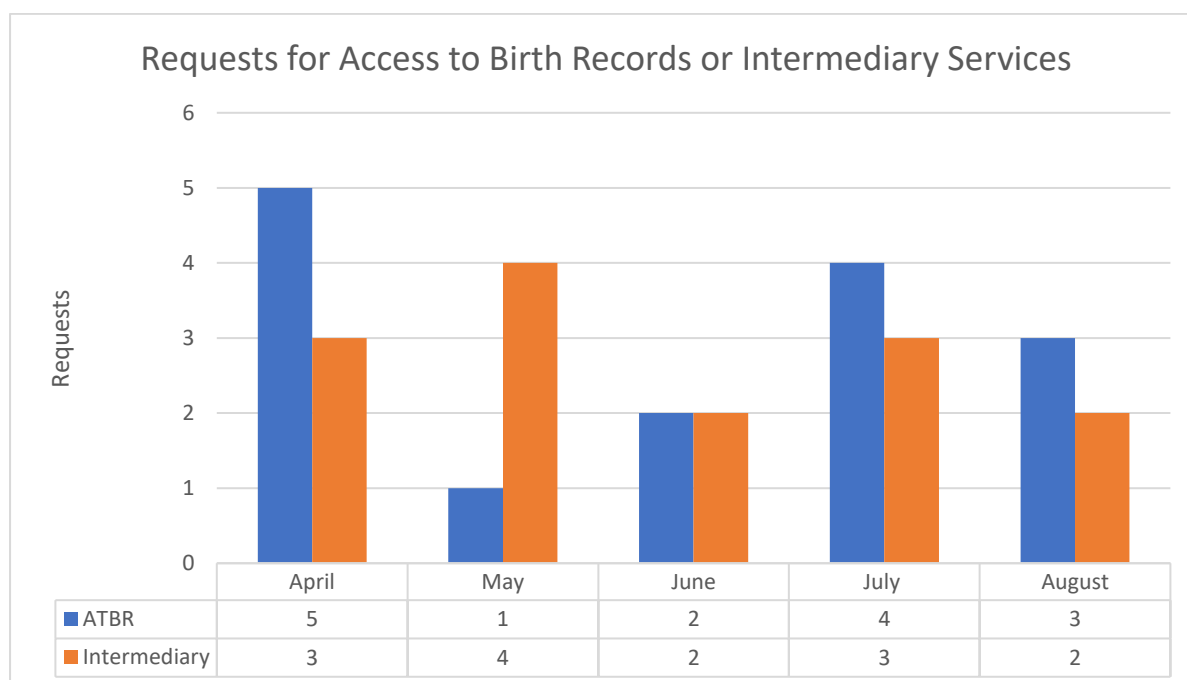
Referrals

32 new referrals for Post Adoption Support were received during the reporting period.



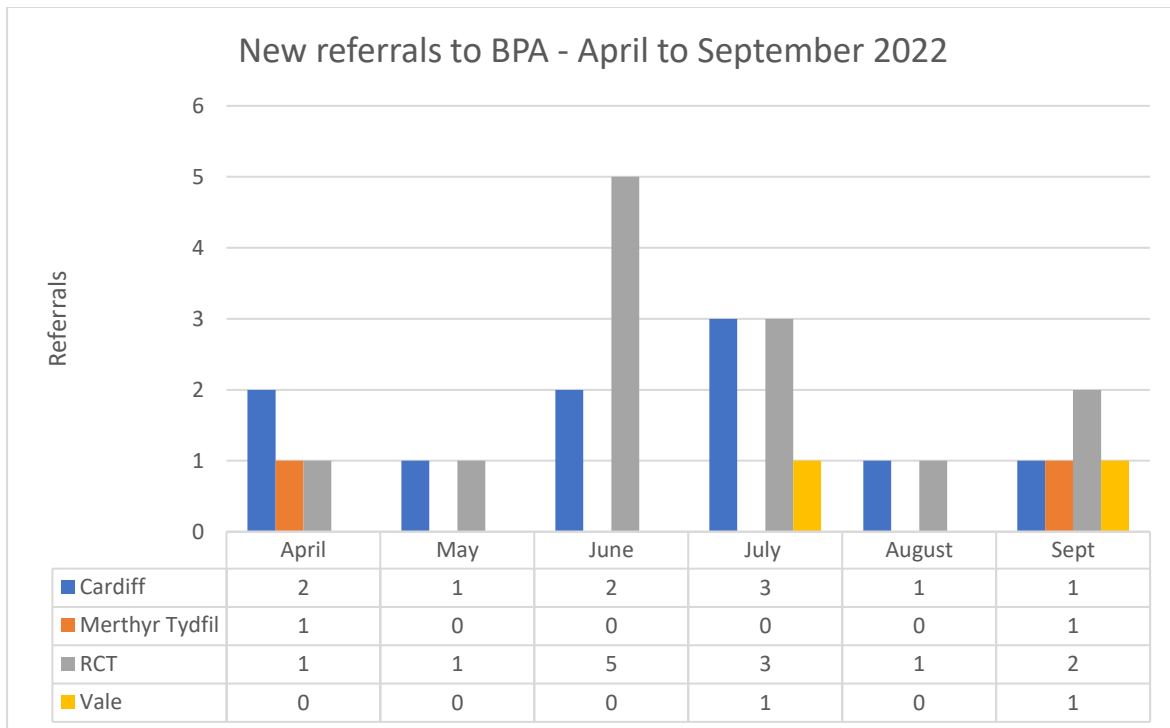
Access to Birth Records and Intermediary Services

29 referrals were received for Access to Birth Records and Intermediary Services.



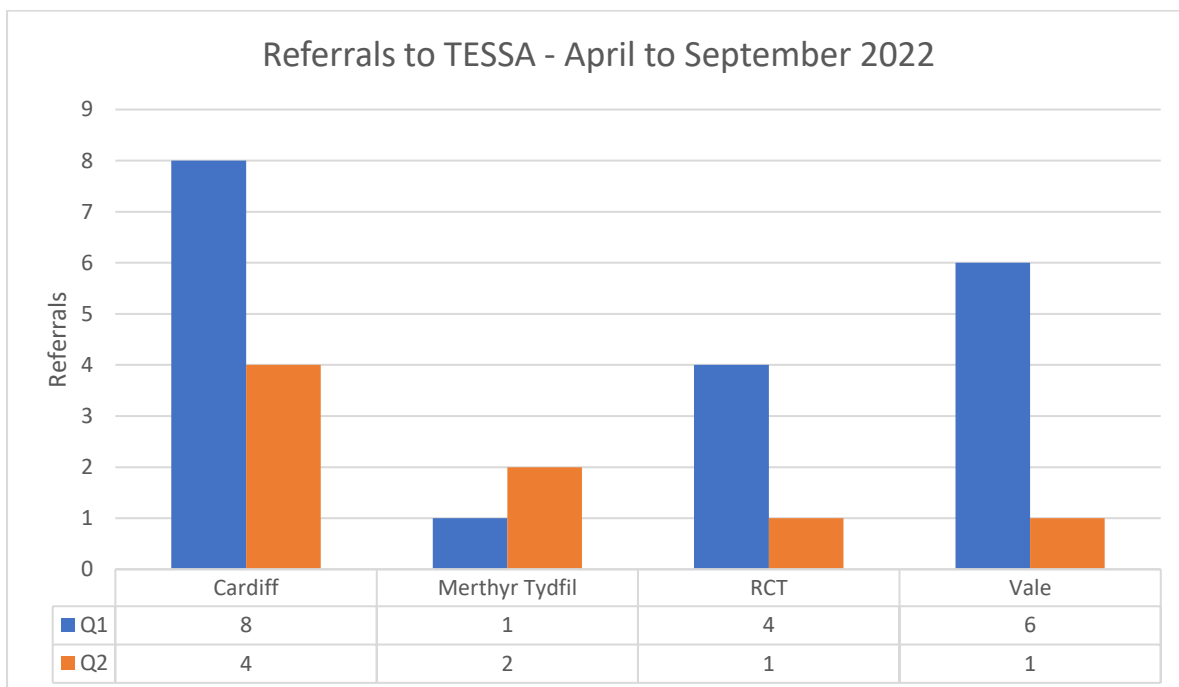
Birth Parent Adviser

27 new referrals to the Birth Parent Adviser were received during the reporting period.



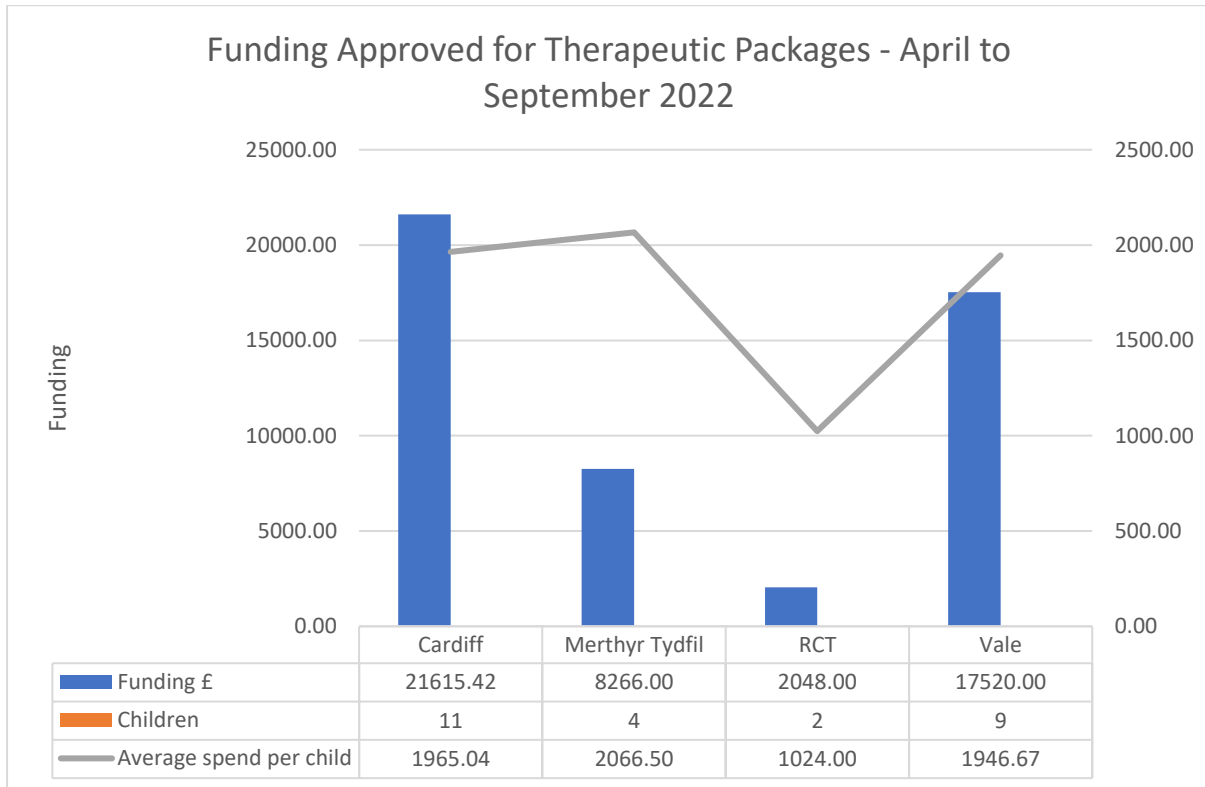
TESSA

27 new referrals to TESSA were made during the period April to September 2022.



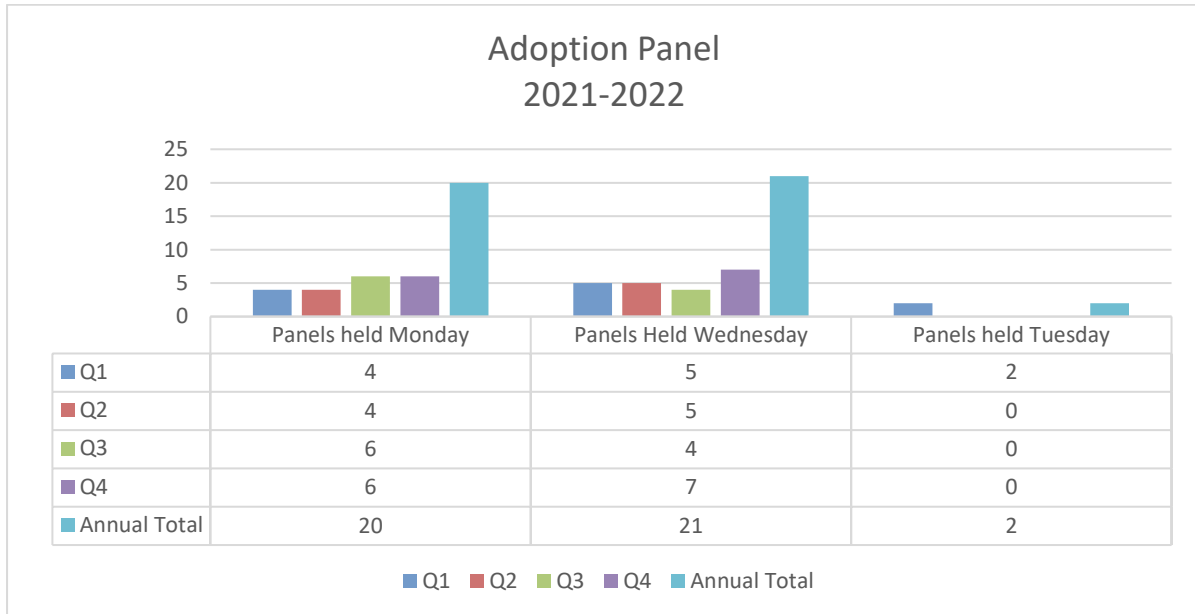
Financial Expenditure

26 children were approved by local authority for therapeutic packages.



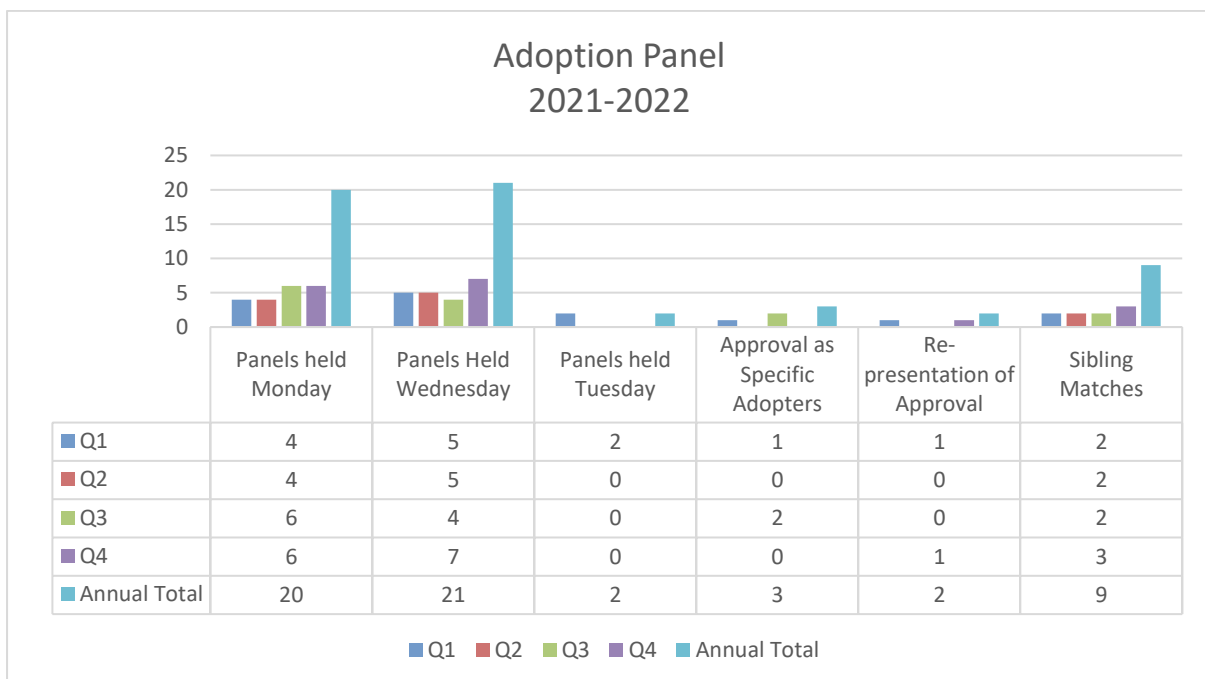
Appendix 4 - Adoption Panel

43 Adoption Panels took place during the reporting period. 50 Adoption Panels were originally scheduled during the year. 7 panels were cancelled as there were no cases scheduled. 4 all-day panels were held.



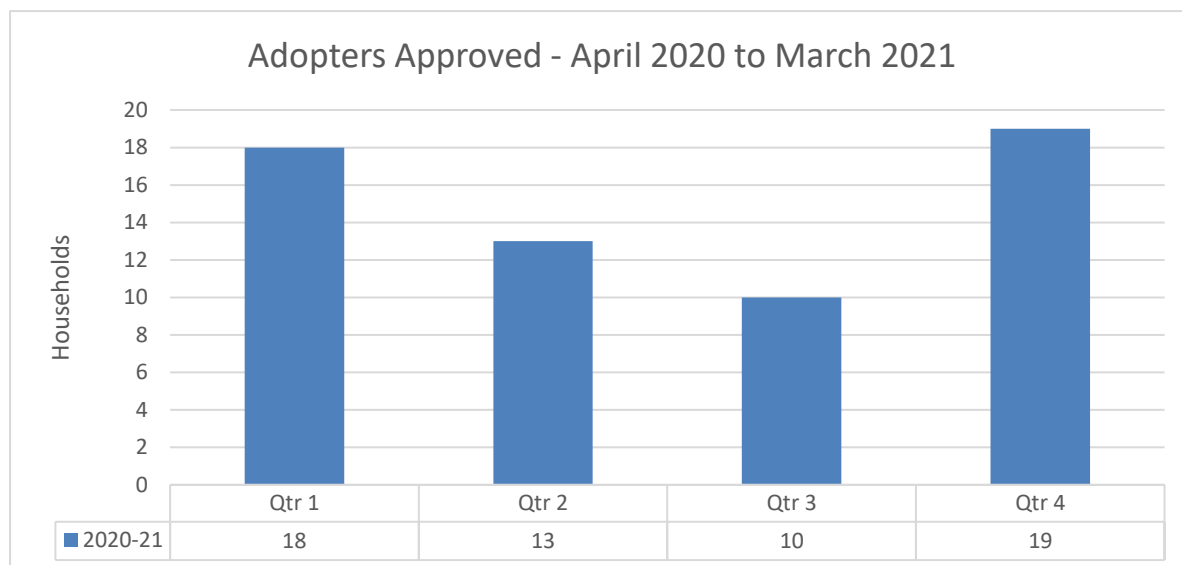
Adoption Panel cases

126 cases were presented to Adoption Panels. 53 prospective adopters were presented for approval and 70 matches were presented. 3 ratified adopter approvals were carried over from previous quarter.



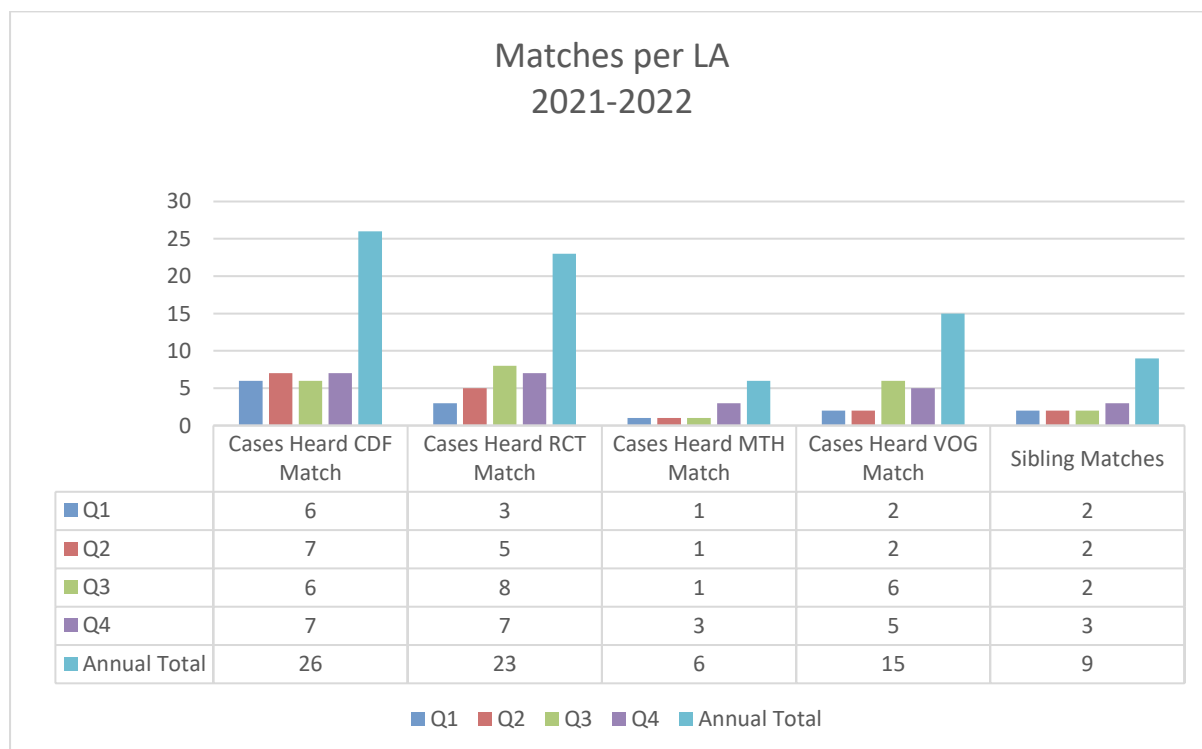
Adopter approval

59 adoptive households have been approved to adopt during the reporting period. **60** adoptive households were presented at panel, 1 of which was awaiting ratification at the end of Quarter 4.



Matches

70 children matches were presented to Adoption Panel during the reporting period. Of the 70 children matches, 9 sibling groups were matched.



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o Deddf Llywodraeth Leol 1972.

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